

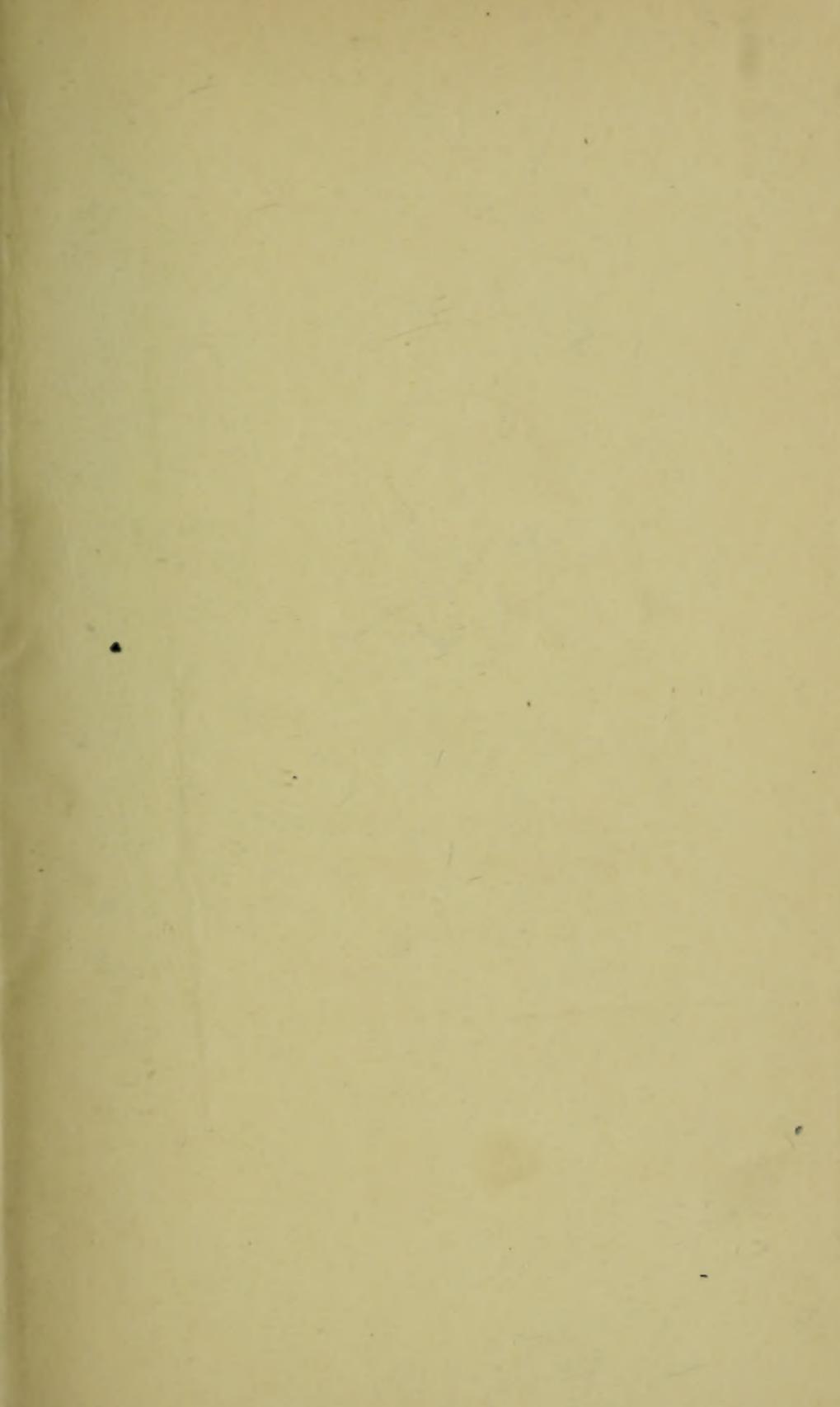


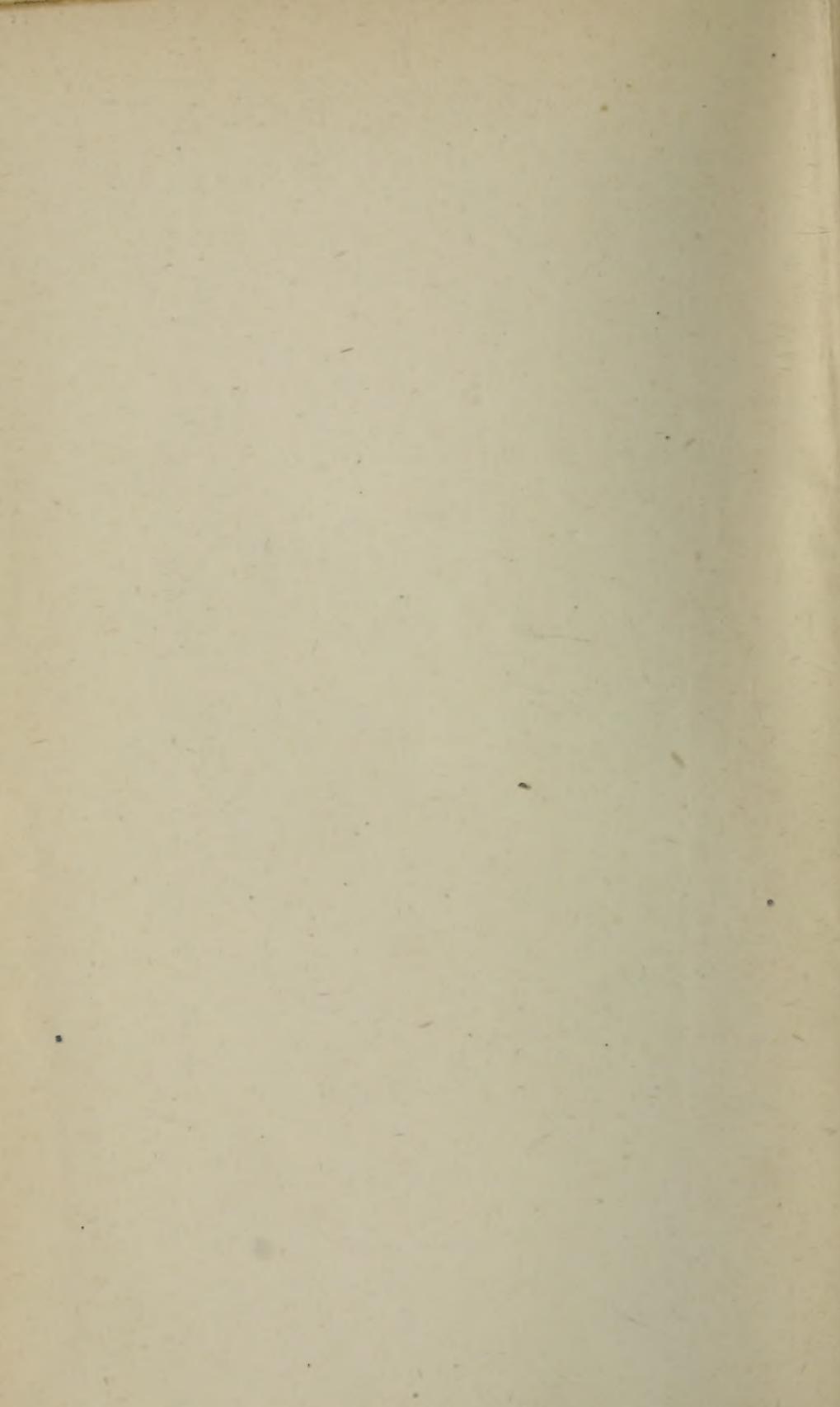
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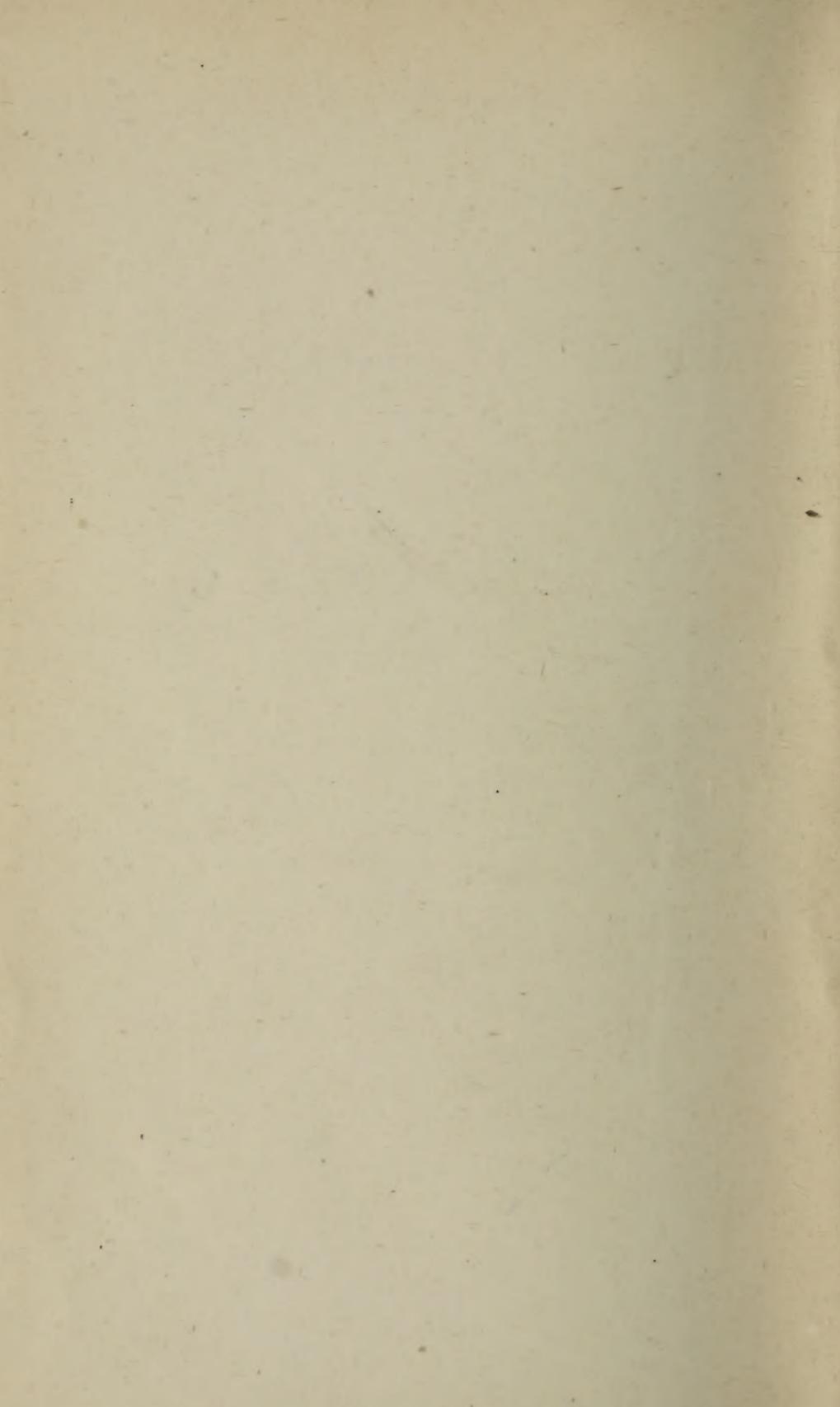
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# ESSAYS

IN

## BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM; [First - Second Series].

BY

PETER BAYNE, M. A.

AUTHOR OF "THE CHRISTIAN LIFE, SOCIAL AND INDIVIDUAL," ETC.

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TWO VOLUMES IN ONE.

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## P R E F A C E.\*

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THE papers here published consist in part of contributions to an Edinburgh Magazine, and in part of compositions which have not previously appeared. Of the former, some have undergone only a slight revision; others have been so modified as to be materially changed in character; while several, though, save in a single instance, retaining their original titles, may be considered altogether new. The series from which the republished articles are selected was entered upon about the commencement of the author's twenty-second year, during the prosecution of theological studies in Edinburgh; the occasion of the step being an inaptitude and distaste for private tuition, and a facility and pleasure, experienced from an early age, in literary composition. The selected essays were published, with one or two exceptions, in the two succeeding years.

\* The remarks in this preface are intended to apply both to the contents of the present volume, and also to those of a **SECOND SERIES**,

An apology may be deemed requisite for offering to the public a work, of which even the germ is found in pieces composed at so early an age. Two considerations chiefly weighed with the writer in permitting the publication. He could not let slip the opportunity offered of bringing together that portion of his early performances, to which, however sensible of their defects, he could yet deliberately append his signature, setting them apart from that far larger portion which he would now altogether cast behind him, as mere confusions of a too much wasted youth. And still more powerfully was he influenced by the reflection, which has for a long time had a firm hold on his mind, that, where a reading public is so extended as that of America, capacities of literary enjoyment, and susceptibilities to instruction, will vary so much, both in kind and degree, that it is by no means easy, if possible, to judge, within certain limits, from the abstract character of a book, whether it will or will not prove useless: and that, therefore, an author, abdicating, in great measure, the right to decide as to the worthiness or unworthiness of his compositions, ought to bow to the unsought expression of public will. Such an expression seemed to be found in the offer of American publishers to issue these volumes: and the author screens himself against all attack, by the plain declaration, that they would not now, perhaps would never, have appeared, but for the enterprise and generosity of Messrs. GOULD AND LINCOLN.

The general contents of these Essays, apart from

their inherent qualities, is such as affords some countenance to the belief that they may not altogether fail in usefulness. They partake largely of the character of an introduction, in successive chapters, to the works of great authors living or deceased. Sir Archibald Alison has testified to the correctness of the view given of his political theories; and it may be added that Mr. De Quincey expressed a very favorable opinion of the essay to which his name is appended. It must not be thought that the writer affirms on every occasion the views he endeavors to define: but to open the way, though defectively, to an intelligence of any mind exercising a powerful influence upon the age, must always be a task of importance.

The papers on Mrs. Barrett Browning, on Mr. Tennyson, and on Mr. Ruskin are, with several others, now first published. To these more weight is attached than to the earliest essays. It struck the author, in glancing over his paper on Mr. Ruskin, that the very strength of his convictions had impeded him in exhibiting their grounds, that his feeling of the total powerlessness of his opponents had made him careless in the use of his weapons. There are things too ghostly to stand the blow of an argumentative club; it passes through them as through air; and so profound is his belief that a large proportion of the critical accusations brought against Ruskin are of this sort, that he was unconsciously heedless in his assault upon them. It may be added that he fell into a mistake as to the identity of one of the reviewers whom he attacks; a

mistake, however, which he hardly regrets and does not alter, since no man is better entitled to bear blows intended for the real, than the supposed, reviewer.

The writer cannot refrain, before letting fall his pen, from expressing in one word his sense of the manner in which the American press treated his former appearance before the American public. Frankness, cordiality, unmerited and exaggerated generosity characterized the welcome received by one totally unknown, the native of another land. The thought of this will be ever among his most proud and sacred recollections: and has added one other to those manifold and profound considerations, which had formerly drawn him, in admiration and affection, accompanied, he ventures to think, by a more deep and manly intelligence than is common in Great Britain, towards the American people. If the present publication is received less favorably than the last, if even it draws on itself decided disapproval and rebuke, he will be liable to no mistake as to the reason of the change.

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# ESSAYS

## IN

# BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM.

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## I.

### THOMAS DE QUINCEY AND HIS WORKS.

ON entering upon the study of De Quincey's writings, the first thing with which we are impressed is a certain air of perfect ease, and as it were relaxation, which breathes around. "The river glideth at his own sweet will;" now lingering to dally with the water lilies, now wandering into green nooks to reflect the gray rock and silvery birch, now rolling in stately silence through the rich, smooth meadow, now leaping amid a thousand rainbows into the echoing chasm, while the spray rises upwards in a wavering and painted column. Mildness, or majesty, or wild Titanic strength may be displayed, but the river is ever at the same perfect ease, all unconscious of the spectator. "My way of writing is rather to think aloud, and follow my own humors, than much to consider who is listening to me;"—these words, used with express reference to the mode in which he composed the "Confessions," may be taken as characterizing, in a degree more or less eminent, De

Quincey's universal manner. The goal, indeed, is always kept in view; however circuitous the wandering may be, there is always a return to the subject; the river's course is always seawards; but there are no fixed embankments, between which, in straight, purpose-like course, the stream is compelled to flow: you are led aside in the most wayward, unaccountable manner, and though you must allow that every individual bay and wooded creek is in itself beautiful, yet, being a Briton, accustomed to feed on facts, like the alligators whom the old naturalists asserted to live upon stones, and thinking it right to walk to the purpose of a book with that firm step and by that nearest road which conduct you to your office, you are soon ready to exclaim that this is trifling, and that you wish the author could speak to the point. But there is some witchery which still detains you; the trifling seems to be flavored by some indefinable essence, which spreads an irresistible charm around; you recollect that nature has innumerable freaks, and may present, in one quarter of a mile, the giant rock and the quivering blue-bell, the defiant oak and the trodden lichen, the almost stagnant pool and the surging cataract: at length the thought dawns upon you, that this author is great because he cannot help it; that he is a force in the hand of nature; that, whether you smile, or frown, or weep, or wonder, he goes on with the same absolute ease, speaking with pure spontaneity the thoughts that arise within him. Then your trust becomes deeper, your earnestness of study redoubles; you are profoundly convinced that here is no pretence, no unnatural effort; your murmuring turns to astonishment at the complexity, richness, and strangely blended variety of nature's effects. If your experience is the same as ours most honestly was, you will proceed from a certain pleasurable titillation,

produced by what you deem twaddle, though twaddle deliciously spiced by genius, to the conviction that, however hampered, however open to objection, here is an intellect, in all the great faculties of analysis, combination, and reception, of a power and range which you are at a loss to measure or define. We must take into account, in judging of the powers of De Quincey, the fact that his life has been shadowed by one great cloud, which would have fatally obscured any ordinary intellect ; that he has seen the stars through a vail, and that we have to mete the power of that vision which could pierce such an obstruction. It must be remembered, too, that the mind of De Quincey is, on all hands, allowed to be one of a very singular and original kind. It is pre-eminently characterized by two qualities, which are partially regarded with suspicion by hard thinkers, and tend to lower the expectation of the reader who is in search of substantial intellectual sustenance : we mean humor, and what we can only call mysticism. De Quincey is essentially and always a humorist ; a humorist of a very rare and delicate order, but whose very delicacy is mistaken by hard minds for feebleness or silly trifling. He is also, to some extent, an intellectual mystic. We use this word in no disparaging sense ; nor do we lay emphasis upon the fact, that he has devoted years of study to the works of express mystics. We indeed think that this last is not of material importance in estimating his writings ; the influence of these writers was not, it appears to us, of sufficient power materially to color his originality. By the quality of mysticism, as attaching to the mind of De Quincey, we mean rather a certain affinity, so to speak, for the mysterious,—a strange idiosyncrasy, in which associations of terror, of gladness, or of gloom, link themselves with certain seasons and places. Voices of sympathy

awaken for him, where no sound falls on the general ear; sorrows, from which the common mail of custom and coarseness, or even active practical occupation, defends other men, affect him with poignant anguish; and joys which are far too delicate and aerial to approach the hard man of the world, float over his soul like spiritual music. He has a sure footing in dim and distant regions, where phantasy piles her towers, and raises her colonnades, and wraps all in her weird and wondrous drapery. He tells us that, "like Sir Thomas Brown, his mind almost demanded mysteries in so mysterious a system of relations as those which connect us with another world;" and we cannot hesitate to use the hint for the explication of much to which he does not, in that connection, intend it to apply. We are met by expressions of sentiment, regarding summer, and death, and solitude, which may appear strange or far fetched, and told of woes which our duller imaginations and less tremulous sympathies almost compel us to deem fantastic. Altogether, to the matter of fact English reader, the phenomena presented by these works are astonishing and alarming; and it is well for him, if his hasty practicality does not prompt him to close them at once, deciding that here is no real metal for life's highway, but only such airy materials as might be used by some Macadam of the clouds. Yet we are confident that De Quincey has performed intellectual service for the age, which could be shown to be practically substantial to the most rigorously practical mind. We would specially urge, moreover, that it is quite possible that writings may be of the highest value, although one cannot trace their association with any department of economic affairs. We are practical enough, and make no pretension to having "wings for the ether." But let it at once be said, that the world is not a manufactory. There

are regions where the spirit of man can expatriate above the corn field or the counter; it is lawful for the immortal principle to rise for a time out of the atmosphere of the labor curse; the universe is really wonderful, and it is not well to forget the fact; nay, finally, it is well for a man, perhaps at times it is best for him, to spread the wings of his mind for regions positively removed from, antipodal to, practice, if haply he may gain glimpses of habitations higher than earth, and destinies nobler than those of time. Bold as the assertion looks, we should question the power of any man to be a docile and accurate disciple of the Comte school of philosophy, who found the highest enjoyment of understanding and sympathy in the works of De Quincey!

When, beneath all its drapery of cloud and rainbow, the grand physiognomic outlines of De Quincey's mind reveal themselves to the reader, his primary observation will probably be, that it is marked by an extraordinary analytic faculty. De Quincey's own opinion declares this to be the principal power in his mind; and though we should not deem this in itself conclusive, we cannot but think it strongly confirmatory of the general evidence gathered from other quarters. "My proper vocation," these are his words, "as I well knew, was the exercise of the analytic understanding." The more we know of De Quincey's writings, the more are we driven to the conviction, that his mind is, in this regard, of an extremely high order. His intensely clear perception of the relation between ideas, the delight with which he expatiates in regions of pure abstraction, where no light lives but that of the "inevitable eye" of the mind, the ease with which he unravels and winds off what appears a mere skein of cloud streamers, too closely twined to be taken apart, and too delicate not to rend asunder, afford irresist-

ible evidence of rare analytic power. That our words may be seen to be no rhetorical painting of our own fancies, but a feeble attempt to indicate a fact, we shall glance cursorily at one or two of those portions of De Quincey's works which give attestation of this power.

The science of political economy is remarkable as one of those in which the abstract and the concrete are seen most clearly in their mutual relations. Beginning with mere abstractions, or what appear such, with factors which must be dealt with algebraically, and seem absolutely independent of practice, it proceeds onwards until it embraces every complexity of our social existence, until every mathematical line is turned into an actual, visible extension, and every ideal form has to take what shape it can amid the jostling and scrambling of life. It is thus, in our opinion, perhaps the very best study in which a man can engage for the culture of his argumentative nature. For, as we say, it has every stage: it demands mathematical accuracy in one part, and lays down rigidly the ideal law; it brings you on till you are in the field and workshop, till you have to calculate the strength of varied desires, the probable upshot of complicated chances, the modifications produced by a thousand nameless influences. From the mathematical diagram to the table of statistics, from the academy to the street, from the closet of the philosopher to the world of the statesman, political economy conducts the student. Whatever the practical value of the science to the merchant, legislator, moralist, or philanthropist,—and we have no leisure to demonstrate, as we think is possible, its practical value to each,—it scarcely admits of a doubt, that, as an instrument of mental culture, it is invaluable. But this remark is incidental: we have glanced at the general nature of the science of political economy, in order that we may exhibit

clearly the particular department in which De Quincey is distinguished. This, of course, is the abstract portion. The fundamental laws of the science, or rather the one fundamental law on which it is all built, furnished his mind with occupation. This one fundamental law is the law of value. It determines what is, viewed abstractly, the grand cause which fixes the relative value of articles,—how much of any one will exchange for so much of any other. Once this is found, you know whence all deviations depart, you know how each modifying element will act, you have, so to speak, formed your theory of the seasons, although you cannot tell what showers may fall, what winds may blow, what ripening weeks of sunshine may usher in the harvest. “He,” says De Quincey, “who is fully master of the subject of value, is already a good political economist.” We agree with him, and think that political economy first and forever became an established science, when the theory of value was perfected. The honor of having published the demonstration belongs to David Ricardo; but De Quincey, as has so often happened, found himself anticipated with the public. He had arrived at the same results; but little remained for him to do, save to silence a few objectors who long continued to oppose Ricardo. This he did in the “Templars’ Dialogues,” in a manner so clear and conclusive, that assent may be said to have become synonymous with comprehension. It is difficult to convey any idea of these papers to one who has not read them. To quote any passage were an improvement upon the brick sample of the house, for it would be to offer a stone as sample of an arch; to abridge is out of the question, for they are models of terseness. Considered as pieces of reasoning, they are truly masterly. There is an artistic perfection about them. The beauty of precision, of clear-

ness, of absolute performance of the thing required, is the only beauty admissible. Accordingly, there is not an illustration which is not there simply because it speaks more clearly than words; there are no flourishes of rhetoric; all is quiet, orderly, conclusive, like the British line advancing to the charge, and with the same result. It is true that, even in them, De Quincey could not be dull, and so there is the slightest infusion of humor, which adds a raciness to the whole, and is thus promotive of the general effect. Mr. M'Culloch, a man not given to enthusiasm, says of these papers, that they "are unequalled, perhaps, for brevity, pungency, and force."

De Quincey's introduction to political economy was characteristic, and illustrates remarkably the nature of his powers. He took to it as an amusement, when debility had caused the cessation of severer studies. About the year 1811, he became acquainted with a great many books and pamphlets on the subject; but it seems that what had employed the concentrated, protracted, and healthful energies of men for about a couple of centuries, could not for a moment bide the scrutiny of his languishing eye. Thus politely and composedly does he indicate his general impression of what books, pamphlets, speeches, and other compositions bearing on political economy had come in his way:—"I saw that these were generally the very dregs and rinsings of the human intellect; and that any man of sound head, and practised in wielding logic with a scholastic adroitness, might take up the whole academy of modern economists, and throttle them between heaven and earth with his finger and thumb, or bray their fungus heads to powder with a lady's fan." Such sudden and amazing proficiency, we presume, scientific professors would not extremely desire. However, this surprising pupil was soon to meet the mas-

ter:—"At length," he proceeds, "in 1819, a friend in Edinburgh sent me down Mr. Ricardo's book; and, recurring to my own prophetic anticipation of the advent of some legislator for this science, I said, before I had finished the first chapter, 'Thou art the man!' Wonder and curiosity were emotions that had long been dead in me. Yet I wondered once more: I wondered at myself, that I could once again be stimulated to the effort of reading; and, much more, I wondered at the book. Had this profound book been really written in England during the nineteenth century? \* \* \* \* Could it be that an Englishman, and he not in academic bowers, but oppressed by mercantile and senatorial\* cares, had accomplished what all the universities of Europe, and a century of thought, had failed to advance even by one hair's breadth? All other writers had been crushed and overlaid by the enormous weight of facts and documents; Mr. Ricardo had deduced *à priori*, from the understanding itself, laws which first gave a ray of light into the unwieldy chaos of materials, and had constructed what had been but a collection of tentative discussions into a science of regular proportions, now first standing on an eternal basis."

Are our readers acquainted with the "Principles of Political Economy and Taxation," by David Ricardo? If not, they will hardly appreciate De Quincey's enthusiasm, or understand what it implies. Butler and Edwards are by no means drawing-room authors, yet the perusal of their works seems to us to approach the nature of an intellectual recreation, compared with that of this book of Ricardo's. We consider it that volume which, of all we know, requires the highest tension and effort of intellect. It has a thousand

\* "Senatorial:"—this is a mistake. Ricardo entered the House of Commons in 1819; his work was published in 1817.

times been charged with obscurity, and a filmy subtlety of speculation ; yet its difficulty consists principally in that it is the production of a mind so exceedingly clear, that it could completely master and fully embrace a subject, by seeing its great leading points of illumination, without tracing the path from the one to the other. Thus the reader is, as it were, carried from eminence to eminence by the writer, without being shown the way he travels ; and having reached each, not by the usual step by step method, he is moved to question the reality of his progress, and to object to the extraordinary new method of instruction, in which he must ever and anon commit himself to the strong arm or wing of the preceptor, to be carried to a higher station. He feels that too large a demand is made on his faith ; he wishes to walk a little by sight. Ricardo coolly sets him down, with the assurance that his progress has been real, and that now he stands on a higher platform than he ever occupied before ; but with the declaration, that he must find some other to explain pedagogically the mode of advancement, since there are further heights to which his guide must forthwith ascend. Now, De Quincey had the supreme satisfaction of going side by side with Ricardo in his aerial voyagings ; he knew well whither he was going, and the absolute certainty that it was onwards ; he could look down, with a satisfied, half-sneering smile, upon the strugglers below, who jogged honestly but slowly along, proclaiming their distrust in all aerial carriages. In those "Templars' Dialogues" he seems to sit in the chariot with Ricardo, laughing at Malthus and other disbelievers, and calling to them to look up, and see that all their difficulty of apprehension lies in the fact, that the one path is through the air, straight as an arrow's flight, while the other is along the ground, amid sand heaps and tangled jungles. De

Quincey himself has admirably described the nature of Ricardo's obscurity, by saying that, if it can be fairly alleged against him at all, it can arise only from "too keen a perception of the truth, which may have seduced him at times into too elliptic a development of his opinions, and made him impatient of the tardy and continuous steps which are best adapted to the purposes of the teacher. For," he adds, "the fact is, that the *laborers of the Mine* (as I am accustomed to call them), or those who dig up the metal of truth, are seldom fitted to be also *laborers of the Mint*, — that is, to work up the metal for current use." "Seed corn," says Goethe, "should not be ground." Such were the difficulty and the obscurity of Ricardo. Now, we certainly should find no claim to an extraordinary analytic faculty on the mere power to comprehend any author; but the fact of keen enjoyment, of free, exulting pleasure being derived from the perusal of a book, is always conclusive proof of an affinity with the powers it exhibits; and the instant recognition with which De Quincey welcomed Ricardo's discoveries, as well as the perfect comprehension, nay, light and graceful, and absolutely commanding mastery, with which he ever after used and expounded them, may be regarded, even independently of his own words, as sufficient evidence that he himself had trodden the same high path, that the same laws unfolded themselves, almost contemporaneously, to the analytic intellects of De Quincey and Ricardo. We claim not for the former any honor which the succession of the years denied him; but when the question is not of the honor of a discovery, but the possession of a faculty, our argument is irresistible. We think, therefore, that in the mere power of analysis, leaving all else out of account, an equality may be vindicated for De Quincey with the great legislator in political economy.

More than this we do not claim; but no one who has any acquaintance with the works of Ricardo, will require a further proof that the English Opium Eater is a writer whose works deserve earnest study from all who love clear and far seeing thought.

Leaving political economy, and entering the wider field of history, professing also no longer to abide with psychological correctness by the faculty of analysis, but seeking the traces of general power and clearness of intellect, we would advance the general proposition, That De Quincey has looked over the course of humanity with such a searching, philosophic glance, that, desultory though his teaching has been, he has discerned and embodied in his works certain truths of the last importance. They are of that sort which may be called illuminative; they are rays of light which go along the whole course of time, revealing and harmonizing; their value can be fully appreciated only when one traverses history, carrying them as lamps in his hand, and observing how, in their light, the confused becomes orderly, the dark becomes bright.

We cannot find a better instance than in his ideas regarding war. These furnish, indeed, a remarkable case, and that with which we have been most struck; we think it of itself sufficient to justify what we have above advanced. We had long been of opinion that the ideas regarding war, which not only floated in the public mind, but found countenance from men of high and unquestionable powers, were singularly superficial and unsound; from Foster and Carlyle to John Bright, we heard no word on the subject with which we could agree. It was the first general glance, and that alone, which was taken; the observations on which the arguments were based, were such as every child must again and again have made,—that war was

accompanied with great effusion of blood, that in its scowl the face of the world gathered blackness as of death, that there was no enmity or personal quarrel between the individual combatants, and the like. Foster we found unable to thrill to the ardors of the "Iliad;" or, if he did experience a rising sense of its glories, we saw him shrinking as from sin, and likening the poem to a beautiful but deadly knife. Carlyle, with a satire whose intense cleverness made cool examination of the philosophic value of his words almost impossible, resolved our French wars into the aimless volleys by which the peaceful inhabitants of two far-separated French and English villages of "Dumb-drudge" exterminated each other. We found no clear conception of the function, in the evolution of human civilization, of agencies in themselves calamitous: no philosophic conception of war in its real nature, as the most direful yet indispensable of the effects of reason acting under the curse of labor and the obscuration of sin,—the sublimely fearful yet necessary lightning, which has flashed in the night of human history. Such were our notions, when we happened to fall in with an article by De Quincey, in which he treated of war. A glance was sufficient. The germs of a whole philosophy of war were before us; every lingering doubt was dissipated. And it was a consoling assurance that our views were not, as they looked, peculiarly savage, to find that De Quincey, whose womanly tenderness is, to our knowledge, unexampled in literature, yet sympathized, with calmest deliberation and profound intensity, in those feelings to which men have ever attached sublimity, from the shouts of Marathon to the thunders of Trafalgar. But could we have imagined a linguistic garb like that in which his reasonings were arrayed? How perfect was the mastery with which the whole theme was

grasped! He played with his subject; he touched it with his magician wand, and it took what colors he chose. Whatever of dimness had attached to our ideas, was dissipated as mist by sunlight; all was boldly, clearly, definitely evolved. The thoughts leaped forth in the mail of logic and the plumes of poetry.

This paper on war we would cite as, on the whole, singularly characteristic of De Quincey. Here, most emphatically, is there attested the danger of trusting to first appearances and impressions. Philosophy and fun so intermingle their parts, that one is astonished and startled. Now all seems mirth and jollity; the writer is intent on proving that the ancients pilfered jokes on a large scale from the moderns; that it must have been the former and not the latter, is plain, from the fact, that those were "heathens, infidels, pagan dogs." Then you have a long detail respecting a fund which is to be commenced by a half-crown legacy of De Quincey's, and which is to be put into requisition when the Peace Congress has prevailed, and war vanishes from human history. The fund may accumulate at any interest; ere required, it will, under any circumstances, have reached to the moon; therefore the man in the moon is named a trustee. The destination of the fund is the support of all those to be put out of employment when armies and fleets are disbanded; and the trustees are eloquently and earnestly charged to deal handsomely, nor bring disgrace on the testator's memory by niggardliness. And all this giggling alternates with flashes of revealing intuition, which rectify your every idea of human history, with truths which open up to you the vista of the past, and enable you to define the position of humanity in the present. It is an intermingled dance of northern lights, and far-illumining gleams of precious

radiance. The writer is as one sitting in a chariot at a Roman carnival, and flinging, from the same hand, crackers, and sugar plums, and lumps of pure gold. Ill is it for him who sees the crackers and sugar plums, and thinks there can be no gold! The remark applies more or less to the whole range of De Quincey's writings. No man can fail to perceive the jocularity of the paper we have been describing; but if it is important or indicative of high powers to see beneath all the superficial phenomena of war, and discern its true function in human history, if it is a proof of profundity, that a clear, indubitable light is cast into regions where Foster and Carlyle stumbled about as if blindfold, then we can appeal to the same article as a triumphant vindication of the sterling value of De Quincey's intellectual powers. And how strongly does this confirm what we have said respecting the perfect ease, the absolute want of effort, the free, careless naturalness with which he writes.

De Quincey has devoted several papers to an attempted proof that the sect of Essenes, mentioned by Josephus, were none other than the early Christians. The series is distinguished by great acuteness of argument, and possesses that fascination of style which characterizes every production of the author. The whole logic of the case is brought out in a figure, so simple, so precise, and yet so graceful, that we may quote it:—"If, in an ancient palace, reopened after it had been shut up for centuries, you were to find a hundred golden shafts or pillars, for which nobody could suggest a place or a use; and if, in some other quarter of the palace, far remote, you were afterwards to find a hundred golden sockets fixed in the floor,—first of all, pillars which nobody could apply to any purpose, or refer to any place; secondly, sockets which nobody could fill,—probably even

'wicked Will Whiston' might be capable of a glimmering suspicion that the hundred golden shafts belonged to the hundred golden sockets. And if it should turn out that each several shaft screwed into its own peculiar socket, why, in such a case, not 'Whiston, Ditton, and Co.' could resist the evidence, that each enigma had brought a key to the other; and that by means of two mysteries there had ceased even to be one mystery." The unoccupied sockets are the several heads in the description of the Essenes by Josephus; the missing pillars, the early Christians. Thus is the whole argument seen at a glance. But we cannot say that we have been convinced. We indeed think it remarkably probable that the early Christians and the Essenes were one and the same; but we cannot bring ourselves to regard Mr. De Quincey's manner of accounting for the name satisfactory. We cannot admit the theory of an assumed disguise on the part of the Christians. The plain command to confess Christ before men; the almost excessive valor of the early Christians, prompting them to court martyrdom; the contrariety of such a method of defence to the whole genius of the opposition by the true religion of all that is false in every age, which has always been to unsheathe the sword in the face of the foe, to fling away the scabbard, and to defy him in the name of the Lord; the scarcely conceivable possibility of Christians suddenly, as it were, ducking their heads before the wave of persecution, and emerging again, unrecognized, as Essenes;—these and similar considerations close the avenues of our mind to the most plausible array of proofs which could be adduced against them. But not only are these papers marked by high ingenuity; they contain striking gleams of insight into the whole course of the development of Christianity. We think, for instance, that the following remark is not more

daring than it is important :— “ In strict philosophic truth, Christianity did not reach its mature period, even of infancy, until the days of the Protestant Reformation.” This casts a light before and after. And it is a sublime idea to which it leads ;— the idea of the whole human race, through long millenniums, gazing upon the handwriting of God, and only in the slow course of centuries spelling it out. There is also, in the articles before us, an exactness of conception as to what Christianity really is, which sets De Quincey at a quite immeasurable distance from your general Christian litterateur. He does not confound it with “ virtue,” or any conceivable ethical theory ; he does not, with a mouth homage which is but disguised atheism, lay artistic hands on Christianity, and take it, like any old mythology, to play a part, or to act as a background, in an art novel ; he recognizes the perennial, supernatural element inextricably involved in its very idea, the continual action from age to age of the Spirit of God on the mind of man. In various parts of his works, indeed, De Quincey exhibits a profound insight into the spirit and nature of Christianity,— its essential distinction from Paganism, as a system of doctrines and morals, and not a mere ritual, and its absolute agreement with what is darkest and deepest in the human heart and history.

We have lingered perhaps too long on the subject of De Quincey’s strictly intellectual powers ; but we regret the less having done so, because it is here that our remarks may be of the greatest practical value. All men acknowledge De Quincey’s genius ; all men appreciate, more or less, the grandeur and the delicacy of his imagination ; all own the supremacy of his command over the English tongue. But we think it is not so generally conceded, that he is a substantially valuable thinker ; that there is not only treasure

of intellectual amusement, that there are not only master-pieces of style, within the compass of his works, but that there is much also of that intellectual stuff with which one might build up his system of opinion, or on which he might nourish his highest powers. Even this we have not so much proved, as indicated the means of proving. We might have enlarged on the vast stores of his learning, and still more on the perfect command he has over them all; how with the true poetic might he can fling a subject into the furnace of his genius, shapeless, rugged, and drossy as it may be, and show us it again flowing out in the purity and brightness of molten gold; how at eleven he was a brilliant Latin scholar, and at fifteen could talk Greek, with such fluency and correctness, that his master said he could address an Athenian mob better than his instructor an English; how he studied mathematics, and metaphysics, and theology, and scholastic logic, and all which could give exercise to his soul in the herculean youth of its powers. But we say no more. We think we have said enough to make good our point. We differ from De Quincey in several respects: we fear that, in theology, we march nearer to the standard of Calvin than he would approve; we have already intimated our discontent with certain of his arguments on the identity of the early Christians and Essenes; we think he has underrated John Foster, and he has certainly outstripped our charity in the case of Judas: but yet we esteem him, and we think our readers will agree with us in esteeming him, a really powerful thinker, whose criticism upon human knowledge, and whose direct contributions to its stores, are worthy of being eagerly seized and earnestly scrutinized by thoughtful minds.

We have spoken hitherto of what may be figured as the skeleton or bare framework of De Quincey's mind. We

have found him here comparable with Ricardo. But now we pass to a different delineation. We leave Ricardo and all dry algebraists, geometricians, metaphysicians, and scholastics behind. We come to look upon the glorious garment of sympathy in which De Quincey's mind is robed, and his grand imaginative eye, whose glance can clothe every algebraic formula in light as of the stars. He himself speaks of the "two hemispheres, as it were, that compose the total world of human power,—mathematics on the one hand, poetry on the other;" and we must think that he can expatiate in both. It is our belief, indeed, that every mind of a very high order can. It is of beneficent arrangement that men in general are furnished with distinct tendencies and powers: it is well that each man does his own work best, and even has a certain suppressed feeling that his special work is the most important in this world. But it is a positive and confounding error to apply the general rule to the few individual minds which rise far above the common level. Of these minds we think no assertion can be made with less of hesitancy or qualification, than that their powers and sympathies are diverse. We can trace the smothered gleams of a burning imagination through the works of Jonathan Edwards, like volcanic fires kept under by the solid ground, and towered cities, and stable mountains, of some Italy or Trinacria. Plato was the greatest prose poet that ever lived; the softening radiance of poetic light which played over the massive intellect of Luther gave it a beauty which will never fade; and we have no doubt that imaginative fire burned in the unwavering, far-searching eye of Calvin. To borrow a suggestion from those words of De Quincey regarding the hemispheres, we would say, that all great men have an intellectual night and an intellectual day: in the still, vast night, when no color rests on

the earth, and the stars in their courses are treading the fields of immensity, they look up calm and abstracted, to learn, by pure, unimpassioned thought, the laws of nature and of truth; in the blaze of day's sunlight, when the world is arrayed in its robe of many colors, and clouds, waves, and forests are rejoicing in beauty, they also share the joy, and take of the glories of nature to clothe the thoughts revealed to them in the silent night.

We are not prepared to say that what De Quincey has actually accomplished will prove sufficient to vindicate for him a place among the mighty ones of bygone ages, among the few who occupy the intellectual thrones of the world; but we do say, that there are unmistakeable traces that his natural endowment was of this royal order, that, in the two great forms of intellect — the imaginative and the abstractive — he was magnificently gifted. The reader has seen how he was affected by Ricardo's political economy, — it was a case of positive, rapturous delight. But now hear this:— “A little before that time (1799), Wordsworth had published the first edition (in a single volume) of the ‘Lyrical Ballads;’ and into this had been introduced Mr. Coleridge’s poem of the ‘Ancient Mariner,’ as the contribution of an anonymous friend. It would be directing the reader’s attention too much to myself, if I were to linger upon this, the greatest event in the unfolding of my own mind. Let me say, in one word, that, at a period when neither the one nor the other writer was valued by the public, — both having a long warfare to accomplish of contumely and ridicule, before they could rise into their present estimation, — I found in their poems ‘the ray of a new morning,’ and an absolute revelation of untrodden worlds, teeming with power and beauty as yet unsuspected among men.” These are the words of De Quincey. Now, we think it a very remarkable

fact, and one to which, in forming any estimate of the author of whom we treat, great importance is to be attached, that he was the first, or among the first, to hail the rising, in quarters of the literary heaven so widely apart, and with such an antithetic diversity of radiance of two such stars as Wordsworth and Ricardo. The light of Ricardo is perhaps, in every sense, good and bad, the driest in English literature; the general intellect even of practical England turns away from it. Wordsworth is, of all poets, the furthest removed from the practical world: he is the listener to the voice of woods, the watcher of the wreathing of the clouds; he can drink a tender and intense pleasure from the waving of the little flower, from the form of its star-shaped shadow; he can even enter, by inexpressible delicacy of poetic sympathy, into the feelings which his own creative power imparts, and wish that little flower

“Conscious of half the pleasure that it gives:”

from him, too, the general intellect of practical England, as proved in the case of Arnold, turns away dissatisfied. In the range of De Quincey’s sympathies — and the sympathies are the voices or the ministers of the powers, the leaves by which the plant drinks in the air of heaven — there was compass for both.

It is no fable of poetry or dream of a fevered brain, that the human mind is a macrocosm of nature; it is a fact to which even physiological science is now according her assent, and which a psychological comparison of the intellects of the great and the small in all ages would irresistibly demonstrate. Weakness of intellect and littleness of intellect are found, when well examined, to mean narrowness of intellect: trace men, through all their grades, from those humble forms of the “world school,” where

sit the artisan, the husbandman, and the private soldier, until you reach that august region where human history and all time seem to be spread out, one imperial domain, beneath the sky-like dome of the mind of Shakspeare ; you will find every increase of greatness accompanied by, we had almost said synonymous with, expansion of range. And we certainly know of nothing in modern literary history so boldly and strikingly demonstrative of a superb natural endowment, as the delight, which his own words show to have been rapturous, with which De Quincey watched, on the one hand, the unimpassioned Ricardo threading with his safety-lamp the unexplored labyrinths of political economy ; and gazed, on the other, on nature in the dewy light cast over it by Wordsworth, and marked, yet again, the magician Coleridge, as he blended the glories of chaos and creation in one wondrous phantasmagoria round his spectral ship and his spectral mariner. I am a man, and nothing human do I deem foreign to me : the sentiment is too true to grow old ; and the more human I am, the nearer I approach to what a man may be, the less is there, in all that can be seen or heard, thought or imagined, in air, earth, or ocean, in literature, science, or art, in all this universe, which will be foreign to me.

And since the sympathies are, as we said, but the ministers of the powers, since sympathy is the reconciling, and winning, and gathering invitation, at whose voice all that there is of beauty in stars, and clouds, and dew drops, and the golden leaflets with which summer fringes her robe of green, comes obsequiously to the imagination which can marshal them in a new order, or bid a new creation arise from their combination, the question here presses itself upon us—What has De Quincey himself done, and what field of truth has he opened up, what great poetic structure has he

built? The answer is one which can be easily rendered, but which must create sad reflections. We unhesitatingly say De Quincey has done much, but we profoundly and sorrowfully feel that he might have done much, incalculably much, more. Coleridge rose gloriously sunward in his mighty youth, sweeping at once into fields of the poetic heaven which had not been entered since the days of Milton. But, as if some maddening or bewildering enchantment had fallen on him, it was seen that the aerial poise of his wings became unsteady, he seemed to stagger in the sky, and never again, however grand his convulsive flappings, however determined his efforts to sustain his upward flight, did he sail with aught of the Miltonic strength or the Miltonic majesty. That maddening enchantment was opium. Under its tremendous sway fell also De Quincey. The English tongue seems somewhat too practically framed to serve well the purpose of lamenting; it affects rather the battle melody, or the song of the worker; and whatever its powers may be in this direction, we shall not here tune it to elegaic murmurings. It is a truly British sentiment which Carlyle expresses, when he says:—

.. 'Tis a thriftless thing to be sad, sad;  
    'Tis a thriftless thing to be sad."

We shall abandon then the language of regret, and endeavor rather to find cause of rejoicing in what has actually been realized for us by De Quincey. And truly, if it may appear startling or absurd to speak of the English language as inexpressive of sorrow, when it is the language in which De Quincey has written, while yet what we allege remains true,—since it is a noble, an elevating sorrow, a sorrow which makes us weep no weak or ignoble tears, and is immeasurably removed from whining, to which De Quincey has given

expression,— we may say that the sorrow with which we regard the influence exerted over De Quincey by opium, is one which is unusually and wondrously chequered by gleams of gladness. We confess that sorrow is, on the whole, the prevailing emotion in our minds, when we regard the total phenomenon; for we are convinced that nature in perfect health will always work more grandly than nature in any conceivable state of disease, and we doubt not that all the beauty which we now admire in the writings of De Quincey, had been secured and enhanced had he never known the delirious joys or sorrows of opium. Yet who that has looked in wondering admiration at what he has actually done, can pretend to say that he can know, by any effort ofceptive sight, and not solely by faith, what potentialities of grander performance De Quincey did possess? Are we sure that, had there been no opium in the case, such efforts had been suggested, or that a canvass would have been found for such picturings?

We suppose it will be agreed that there is nothing in our language to be compared with De Quincey's dreams; nay, to speak of comparison is inadmissible, for they are absolutely alone; all other authors who have ventured on visionary delineations — and of these there are enough — would grant that their dreams were generically different from his. In Germany, there have been two writers who can be put in comparison with him, — Richter and Novalis. His own translations and Carlyle's have made us familiar with the terrors and the glories of Jean Paul's dreams. The “Dream upon the Universe,” which De Quincey rendered into English in the “London Magazine,” and various others which are widely known, enable us to form a definite opinion regarding his general manner; and we record it as our decided impression, that it may be maintained as a general

truth, that there reigns over De Quincey's dream creations a taste more austerely classic, more chaste, more majestic, than ruled those of Richter. The "Suspiria" have been much lauded; we acknowledge their surpassing power; but it is to the "Dream Fugue," founded on the "Vision of Sudden Death," that we point, with calmest assurance, as illustrating our general remark, and demonstrating the superiority of De Quincey over Jean Paul. In the visions of the latter there is a certain barbaric splendor, a chaotic wildness, a bewildering accumulation of fearful or of gorgeous images, suggestive rather of the fury and might of the tempest than of the strength of light. The supremacy of order seems, as it were, questioned or questionable. The picture is hidden by its own drapery; the melody scarce traceable in the immeasurable volume of sound. Right or wrong, the British intellect cannot tolerate indistinctness. Now, in that succession of dreams which we have mentioned, and which seems to us to constitute De Quincey's masterpiece, there is, over all the splendor and terror, a clear serenity of light which belongs to the very highest style of poetic beauty. The conceptions are very daring, but each form of spurious originality is absent,—the fantastic and the grotesque; there is the mystery of the land of dreams, yet so powerful is the imagination which strikes the whole into being, that the wondrous picture has the vividness and truth of reality; while, with every change of scene and emotion, the language changes too—now rich, glowing, and bold, when the idea is free, sunny joyousness—now melting into a gentle, spiritual melody of more than Æolian softness—and now rising to a Homeric swell, that echoes the everlasting gallop of the steeds which drag that triumphal car. This "Dream Fugue" is of no great compass, but we think that it would alone have been sufficient to

secure a literary immortality. Taken in connection with the incident which was its occasion ; considered as a poetic idealization of reality, and an effort of linguistic power ; tried by the severe rules of art, as demanding the very highest manifestation of order and harmony possible by man, we think we could maintain against all comers that this is, for its size, the noblest production in English prose. And we cannot but think that nothing so perfect ever rose before the imagination of Jean Paul Richter. The little we know of the dream paintings of Novalis leads us to think that there is a closer similarity between his manner and De Quincey's, than subsists in the case we have mentioned. The delicacy, the mildness, and the powerful imagination of Novalis, remind us strongly of De Quincey ; but we do not know enough of his writings to draw a detailed parallel.

We are utterly unable to justify to our readers the above opinion respecting the “Dream Fugue ;” and we have a certain reluctance to associate any description we could give with the impressions which the original is fitted to produce. But we feel it necessary to give at least something like positive proof that our words are not those of extravagance ; and therefore we compel ourselves to attempt to extract one or two such pieces from the “gorgeous mosaic” of this dream, as may, though faintly, suggest an idea of the whole.

During the French war, De Quincey used to come down annually on the mail-coach from London to Lancashire. It was the office of the mail to spread the news of the great victories. On one occasion, he came down after a great battle. An incident which occurred on the way was the occasion of the “Dream Fugue.” It was a night which De Quincey alone was capable of describing :—

“ Obliquely we were nearing the sea upon our left, which

also must, under the present circumstances, be repeating the general state of haleyon repose. The sea, the atmosphere, the light, bore an orchestral part in this universal lull. Moonlight and the first timid tremblings of the dawn were now blending ; and the blendings were brought into a still more exquisite state of unity by a slight silvery mist, motionless and dreamy, that covered the woods and fields; but with a vail of equable transparency. \* \* \* \* \*

Still, in the confidence of children that tread without fear *every* chamber in their father's house, and to whom no door is closed, we, in that sabbatic vision which sometimes is revealed for an hour upon nights like this, ascend with easy steps from the sorrow-stricken fields of earth upwards to the sandals of God. Suddenly from thoughts like these I was awakened to a sullen sound, as of some motion on the distant road. It stole upon the air for a moment ; I listened in awe ; but then it died away."

The coachman was fast asleep, and could not be awaked ; the horses were going at a fearful pace ; the mail was heavy. It was on the wrong side of the road. Any living thing, or any vehicle containing such, which came across its path, must go to shivers. All this and more De Quincey comprehended at one intuitive glance. "Ah, reader ! what a sullen mystery of fear, what a sigh of woe, seemed to steal upon the air, as again the far off sound of a wheel was heard!" On they dashed ; every effort he made in the way of remedy was vain ; at last the horses, by this time at fiery speed, swept round an angle of the road, and all was revealed. "Before us lay an avenue, straight as an arrow, six hundred yards, perhaps, in length ; and the unbrageous trees which rose in a regular line from either side, meeting high overhead, gave to it the character of a cathedral aisle. These trees lent a deeper solemnity to the

early light ; but there was still light enough to perceive, at the further end of this Gothic aisle, a light, reedy gig, in which were seated a young man, and by his side a young lady." These are either married, or in the highest state of love ; for a reason which De Quincey and we do not understand, the young man "carries his lips forward to hers." "The little carriage is creeping on at one mile an hour ; and the parties within it being thus tenderly engaged, are naturally bending down their heads. Between them and eternity, to all human calculation, there is but a minute and a half." De Quincey shouts ; at the second shout the young man takes the alarm. He has just time to raise his horse's fore feet by a strain on the reins, and pull him round, and make him take one leap forward, when the mail tears past. In its way, it gives a stroke to the little gig, which makes it shiver as a thing alive ; those who sit there all but taste the agony of death, yet are safe. "The blow, from the fury of our passage, resounded terrifically. I rose in horror, to look upon the ruins we might have caused. From my elevated station I looked down, and looked back upon the scene, which in a moment told its tale, and wrote all its records on my heart forever.

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"But the lady——! Oh, heavens! will that spectacle ever depart from my dreams, as she rose and sank upon her seat, sank and rose, threw up her arms wildly to heaven, clutched at some visionary object in the air, fainting, praying, raving, despairing ! Figure to yourself, reader, the elements of the case ; suffer me to recall before your mind the circumstances of the unparalleled situation. From the silence and deep peace of this saintly summer night,—from the pathetic blendings of this sweet moonlight, dawn-light, dream-light, — from the manly tenderness

of this flattering, whispering, murmuring love,—suddenly as from the woods and fields,—suddenly as from the chambers of the air, opening in revelation,—suddenly as from the ground yawning at her feet, leaped upon her, with the flashing of cataracts, Death, the crowned phantom, with all the equipage of his terrors, and the tiger roar of his voice.

“The moments were numbered. In the twinkling of an eye, our flying horses had carried us to the termination of the umbrageous aisle ; at right angles, we wheeled into our former direction ; the turn of the road carried the scene out of my eyes in an instant, and swept it into my dreams forever.”

The elements with which the writer works in the “Dream Fugue” are now before the reader : the coach at an unusual pace, and laurelled with the tokens of victory, the umbrageous avenue like a cathedral aisle, the narrow escape of the lady. These reappear in the “Fugue” in various forms, and transfigured by the light of an imagination which creatively remodels, recombinis, and illumines the whole. The mail-coach becomes a triumphal car, on whose path all nations attend, and which carries to all peoples, in letters of mystic light, the tidings of a victory which has broken the bonds of the world ; over the heads of the horses the tidings go, embodied in this legend, which casts around a golden light, “Waterloo and Recovered Christendom.” The gates of cities fly open ; rivers are silent, as the car, in its tremendous gallop, dashes across them ; “the infinite forests” shiver in homage to the word. The umbrageous avenue becomes an immeasurable cathedral aisle, along which the tireless steeds sweep onwards in almost viewless speed. In the far distance is seen a vast necropolis, “a city of sepulchres, built within the saintly cathedral for the

warrior dead that rested from their feuds on earth." "Of purple granite was the necropolis ; yet, in the first minute, it lay like a purple stain upon the horizon,— so mighty was the distance. In the second minute it trembled through many changes, growing into terraces and towers of wondrous altitude, so mighty was the pace. In the third minute, already, with our dreadful gallop, we were entering its suburbs. Vast sarcophagi rose on every side, having towers and turrets that, upon the limits of the central aisle, strode forward with haughty intrusion, that ran back with mighty shadows into answering recesses. Every sarcophagus showed many bas-reliefs,— bas-reliefs of battles, bas-reliefs of battle fields ; of battles from forgotten ages,— of battles from yesterday,— of battle fields that, long since, nature had healed and reconciled to herself with the sweet oblivion of flowers,— of battle fields that were yet angry and crimson with carnage." And the lady,— what has become of her ? Does she still occupy a place in the wondrous pageant ? Yes : her transformation is the most strange, and yet, in its beauty, the most perfect of all. Look again :— "And now had we reached the last sarcophagus, now were we abreast of the last bas-relief, already had we recovered the arrow-like flight of the illimitable central aisle, when, coming up this aisle to meet us, we beheld a female infant that rode in a carriage as frail as flowers. The mists which went before hid the fawns that drew her, but could not hide the shells and tropic flowers with which she played,— but could not hide the lovely smiles by which she uttered her trust in the mighty cathedral, and in the cherubim that looked down upon her from the topmost shafts of its pillars. Face to face she was meeting us ; face to face she rode, as if danger there were none. 'Oh, baby !' I exclaimed, ' shalt thou be the

ransom for Waterloo? Must we, that carry tidings of great joy to every people, be messengers of ruin to thee?" By sudden and magnificent changes in the dream pageantry the baby is delivered; and perhaps the boldest yet finest effort of imagination in the whole occurs soon after these sentences. But we can quote no more, and, save quotation, we have no resource in such a case. We have given the outline of only one of the visions. We find, in the others, the original elements variously transformed; we have the coach changed into a stately vessel, the avenue into towering cathedral aisles grouped from the mists of the sea, the lady into one who sits in a fairy pinnace on the ocean. The dangers and the splendors are always such as are accordant with the situation.

But we pause; we think we have already vindicated all our assertions. And now will our readers be prepared to estimate the difficulty which attends a decision of the question, whether, on the whole, it is to be regretted that De Quincey fell under the influence of opium? Our own feeling we have already expressed. We think De Quincey was naturally fitted to take his station among the great systematic thinkers of the olden time, and something unique in literature might have been achieved by the combined operation of such a piercing intellect and so imperial an imagination on the pedestal of the nineteenth century. When his arms, in the strength of manhood, and with all their gigantic powers untrammeled, might have been piling mountain upon mountain, he had still to wrestle in mortal agony with a serpent of deadlier venom and more overwhelming power than ever coiled around an ancient hero. No man has more than a certain force allotted him by nature; it may be greater or less, but it is measured; and it cannot be expended twice. Consider

the intellectual might necessary to vanquish opium in the three fearful assaults of which De Quincey informs us, and then decide concerning the powers of him whose works, wondrous as they are, were all accomplished in the breathing spaces between paroxysms of convulsive warfare. It may, of course, be alleged, that without the opium we never should have had those writings which are most closely associated with the name of De Quincey. But it is our decided opinion that the dreams produced by opium were but the occasion of the visions wherewith the opium eater has amazed the world. These are strictly works of imagination, and may be tried by the same tests as the dreams of Richter and Novalis. We concede that much of their terrific coloring is traceable to opium; but De Quincey's imagination, we are assured, would have worked under any conditions.

We have done little more than glance at the extraordinary man and the extraordinary works of which we have been treating. We have left ourselves no space to speak of his *taste*, which yet so well deserves notice. We merely remind our readers of his account of the little heroine of Easedale and her infant brothers and sisters, and bid them think of the perfect simplicity of the narrative, of the absence of all rhetoric, of the tender delicacy of the feeling. We merely ask them to consider the grace and ease, the softened glow without glitter, the chastely arranged flower wreaths from which every gaudy weed is instinctively bidden away, in one word, the peace and moderation, which everywhere meet us in the writings of De Quincey. Nor can we speak of him further as a *humorist*, although this is perhaps his most important and prevailing aspect. Often his humor is merely an exquisite flavor of drollery, a half hidden smile, a something

which fills you with a certain quiet comfort, but does not make you laugh outright; sometimes it is broad farce, when you do laugh, and cannot but laugh, were it only at the imperturbable gravity of the comic actor; sometimes it is downright horse play, as when old "Toad in the hole" is kicked out, by universal consent of the company and of readers, "despite his silvery hairs and his angelic smile." Sometimes, although very rarely, De Quincey's humor intrudes into places where its presence is utterly indefensible. We shall instance one; by far the most striking. We think it were difficult to match in our late literature, if indeed in our whole literature, the pathetic effect realized in his paper on the Maid of Orleans. De Quincey has there enabled us to define, clearly and conclusively, the function which such as she have, even in their death, performed for mankind. We have so much to harden us in this world, so stern is the struggle of existence, so sadly do the morning dew drops and the early flowers vanish or wither in life's hot day, that you actually confer a precious boon and benefit on a man, when you make him shed a noble tear. No man ever wept with Cordelia by the bed of her stricken father, no man ever saddened at the tale of Margaret's sorrows in the "Excursion," no man ever hung over the dying bed of a true friend, without being a better and a gentler man. And who does not see that, besides all else of instruction and of consolation which arises from the pyres of the martyrs of Christianity, besides the deathless lessons of courage, of devotion, of purest holiness, which they convey, there is this also in the legacy of the fathers to the human race, that, by sympathizing sorrow over their woes, each generation is elevated, and humanized, and ennobled. This great lesson De Quincey has embodied, with an almost

unexampled felicity, in his paper on Joan of Arc. But what must we say to the fact that even here humor is permitted to intrude, that even here there is the sacrilegious play of wit and fun? We must not approach that awful and beautiful spectacle, round which angels were weeping, through a porch painted with satyrs and bacchanals; no "insulting light" must "glimmer on our tears;" we must approach through an avenue of cypress, under whose shade we may weep alone. We can pardon the gambolings of an irrepressible humor when the matter is argumentative, but the heavens must be hung with sackcloth around the pyre of Joan of Arc.

The time has probably not yet arrived to attempt a final portraiture of De Quincey, to estimate the value of his works, and to ascertain their rightful place among English classics. The public mind has yet, in great measure, to be introduced to these works, and a few introductory remarks, a few almost colloquial hints, are all we have here offered. It will, indeed, whensoever attempted, be a task of no common difficulty to portray, in its complete and united proportions, the extraordinary mind of which these multiform and many-tinted writings are the production and manifestation. We must not attempt it here. To speak of separate characteristics is, indeed, easy, whether they be those of the author or his compositions. One may mark the indications of a gigantic receptive faculty, seizing, hundred-handed, and gathering into one storehouse, from all lands and centuries, what intellectual treasures it chooses to make its own; proof may be adduced of that power of original thought, which penetrates into untrodden regions, but dimly pointed towards before, and of that creative, imaginative glance which gives form and life to what therefore was airy

nothing; special attention may be called to a sympathy resembling a musical instrument of unmeasured range, which can distil a melody more tender than the tear of childhood, but has yet chords to voice the roar of ocean or the thunders of war; and you may enlarge indefinitely on the style, on that astonishing mastery over the English language, by which, in swiftly changing variation, you are startled, animated, melted, terrified, amused, and which at times attains a softness, a beauty, an aërial glow, to be claimed as peculiarly De Quincey's, and which compel the describer, sensible of his weakness, to borrow the colors of the master himself, and liken them to the timid tremblings of the dawn, or the blending of moon-light, dawn-light, dream-light. But these are at best scattered traits, — individual instances; it is their union which is the wonder and the peculiarity, and of this union we present no theory at present.

## II.

### TENNYSON AND HIS TEACHERS.

MEN seem by universal consent to have associated the genius of Scott with something of magic and enchantment; not enchantment of a stern or gloomy character, but of a gay, glittering, Arabian sort. A peculiar and natural fitness appears to have been recognized in that household phrase, *The Wizard of Waverley*. And I cannot but believe that the general sense has in this instance been specially felicitous. How can we better represent Scott in our imagination, than as a kindly magician, surrounded by groups of eager and delighted children, before whose eyes he evokes group after group, in endless procession, in that broad, clear, wondrous mirror of his; himself smiling the while, as he half reclines on his well-padded seat, less in complacency at the power of his enchantments, than in pleasure, mingled with mild surprise, at the ecstacies of wonder and joy into which, by every waving of his wand, he throws the children around him? Swiftly, gracefully, beautifully, that long procession moves, the scene ever changing into new forms of loveliness, while an airy music, now rapid and shrill as the sound of clang-ing arms, now faintly, slowly sinking into mournful cadence, now swelling and glowing into the richer harmony of love, is breathed around. The scene is now

the courtly hall, and jewelled figures move stately through the dance. These sweep past and there float into the mirror's magic deeps the grand forms of a mountain land; the cataract leaping to music from the precipice, river hastening to meet river with bridal kiss, and the lake, bearing on its bosom bright island gems, lying placid beneath the crag. Presently, at a sudden turn of the mountain path, there emerges the knight of chivalry, pride and dauntlessness on his brow, a smile of kingly gentleness on his lip. Startled by the sound of his huntsman's horn, the Lady of the Lake, fair as a vision, glides in her skiff, from the glassy deep, into some silvery cove. The scene swims gradually away, and thick clouds, rolling slow before the blast, gather on the moorland, to hang their dim curtains round opposing armies. The battle commences. The pomp and circumstance of feudal war, the plumes, the pennons, the mail-clad steeds, are before us, every form lifted into full, distinct light, and the war cries ringing round. Thus we truly represent to ourselves the poetry of Scott: where all is clear, vivid, instinct with life and motion; where there floats not one cloud of dishonest obscurity, not one film of affected sensibility; where a thousand tints of loveliness glance and gleam before our eyes, like dew drops in clear dawn, or sunbeams on wavering foliage; where the nice definition of form, the elaborate refinement and richness of color, the studied and perfect symmetry, pertaining to the ideal of Greece and of Goethe, are indeed wanting, but where sympathy and love, rejoicing in dewy copse and sparkling flower, in golden corn and smiling meadow, in bounding stream and purple mountain, have become the unconscious ministers of a high artistic perfection, but shed over all a vivacity, an airy sprightliness, a smiling grace, such as

were perhaps never won by the more conscious efforts of Art.

Remove from the poetry of Scott the veil of remoteness and enchantment; for that softly glittering morning light, substitute a fierce red glare; let the spirit of the modern time be breathed in its utmost intensity over every scene and into every character; let skilful narrative give place to grand lyric bursts, and sympathetic memory, exhaustless in its stores, to the poetic imagination in its highest might: and for the poetry of Scott you have the poetry of Byron. Passionate, vivid, excitable, sensitive, Byron was the ideal embodiment of lyric poetry. His personality was too intense to permit him to separate himself from his poetic characters, so as to represent them in the whole breadth and symmetry of their relations, in the fashion of a Shakspeare or a Scott. He has himself incidentally informed us that he regarded poetry from the lyrical point of view. "No poetry," he says, in a letter to Murray, "is *generally* good, — only by fits and starts,— and you are lucky to get a sparkle here and there." Like the lyric poet, he concentrated his powers upon particular passages; like the lyric poet, his own emotion colored all he saw; and, like the lyric poet, his dearest theme was passion. When he describes nature, he always, if his genius is in its strength, bathes it in a transforming light, robes it in a grandeur not its own. Herein it is that his essential superiority to Scott, in regard of strict poetic power, is demonstrated. Scott is opulent in detail, and has nature's sweet changefulness, freshness, and variety. But in all the poetry of Scott, there is no such description as Byron's thunder-storm in the Alps. Besides that accurate realism, that broad, natural truth, which it might well have had from Scott, that description burns with a poetic personification such

as Scott could never have imparted. The live thunder leaps from crag to crag. The mountains have the hearts of men, and exult to each other in the commotion they produce. Scott describes a battle. We know precisely how the divisions were commanded, and when and where they charged. But where, in all the pages of Scott, do we find a line like this,—

“ Red Battle stamped his foot, and nations felt the shock ?”

And if the eye of Byron rolled in that fine lyric frenzy which spreads over nature the hues of human emotion and thought, no less was he a lyrist, and no less was he powerful in the delineation of passion. Since the days of Shakespeare, the burning heart of passion had not been so laid bare. The Corsairs, the Laras, the Gulnares, the Medoras of Byron, perfectly absurd as actual personages, are admirable mouthpieces of lyric emotion, of uncontrollable passion. Totally inadequate to body forth the spirit and tenor of a life, they represent with great effect the feelings of individual exceptional periods. There are such periods in life; volcanic epochs, brief but terrible, when sky and earth are mingled in wild fire-lit commotion, and the peaceful vineyards, ripening in the calm light of long summer days, as yet are not. The emotions of such times, in their burning intensity, in their ethereal tenderness, in the rapture of their joy and the agony of their sorrow, are depicted by Byron with surpassing power. It is when we consider the pure might of imagination exhibited in the individual passages, of which, with a cement of versified prose, the larger poems of Byron have been truly declared by Macaulay to consist,—and the marvellous truth and power with which human passion is everywhere depicted,—that we feel constrained to rank

Byron among the master intellects of mankind, and almost to agree with Goethe that his genius was incommensurable.

But not even in considering the excellence and enduring popularity of literary effort, is it permissible, if it is possible, to abstract any part of the whole life and character. The poetry of Byron is inseparably connected with his life and character. Through the latter there was a fatal flaw; and the former is pervaded by a moral taint, which, as the eye of humanity becomes purer and purer in the lapse of ages, will more and more endanger its literary immortality. The spectacle presented by Byron, in his life and death, is one of which the mysterious sadness may be called infinite. By all we can reverentially assume as to the intentions of the Almighty, and by all the analogy of nature and history, greatness of intellect ought to be one of the forces to keep the soul stable, to preserve a calmness and completeness in the life. So it seems radically to have been with the Platos and Ciceros, the Dantes and Luthers, the Miltons and Leibnitzes, the Pascals and Berkeleys of history. Diverse as the genius of such might be, its power tended to steady them, not to set them rocking like pillars shaken of earthquake. Never for a moment have such faltered in their deliberate assent and submission to the infinite rightness, beauty, and power of moral law. Not even in Swift's case do we find a strict parallel to the phenomenon, so tragically common in these days, of passion conquering genius, and quenching the heaven-soaring flame in its own foul ashes. Mirabeau, Burns, and Byron, to go no further, seem to me to present a spectacle new under the sun. These all had iron constitutions. Physically speaking, they were good for the whole of the threescore years and ten. Yet all three were laid in the dust in the prime of their years; and whatever the palliations we may admit, or the qualifi-

ations we may make, it remains a simple fact that they were, in too literal a sense, their own murderers. No cowardly feebleness, no false humility, no "haunting admiration of the *grandeur* of disordered power," no accursed "hero-worship," ought to be permitted to stifle in us the still small voice which proclaims the awful magnitude of this sin. God and nature affirm the declaration of that still small voice; affirm it in the fevered frame, the burning brow, the early grave: and we are weak, blind, or rebellious, if we do not acknowledge the fact and learn the lesson.

An allusion to the moral taint which pervades the poetry of Byron brings us naturally to the poetry of Wordsworth; which forms the third great school of this opulent period. It is my profound conviction that it was rather to the moral elevation of his poetry, than to his intellectual or æsthetic capacities, that Wordsworth owed the fame and influence he acquired. As you yielded yourself to his guidance, you passed into a region removed alike from that in which the genius of Scott, and that in which the genius of Byron, loved to expatriate. You left behind that joyous land of faery, ringing with the voice of streams and birds, bright with flower and foam, in which you wandered with the border minstrel. You passed beyond the troubled atmosphere where the cloudy grandeurs of the Byronic poetry were unfolded. You stood on the mountain's brow. There at last was the still, unfathomable azure, seeming to look, with calm, eternal smile, on the wild glittering, far below, of the lightnings of passion. The mind of man, the crowning wonder of nature, is in no way more surprising than in its power of sympathy and response. It is easy to cast a spell over it. Any sort of syren chiming allures and subdues it. But its nobler sym-

pathies, inextinguishable though deeply slumbering, have only to be awakened by the tones of a holier melody, when it arises, like a child that has fallen asleep in an unknown land, and looks round, in wistful surprise, listening for that strain which sounded so strangely of home. So it was with the generation that had thrilled to the notes of Scott and Byron. The unchanging verities of faith in God and love to man, proclaimed in their simple majesty, asserted once more the supremacy of their greatness. The still, genial light, diffused in mild and equable radiance through the atmosphere, and gradually whitening the fields into harvest, was recognized as more nobly beautiful than the wild gleaming of volcanic fires. As men stood with Wordsworth on that mountain's brow, they seemed to feel around them the waving of angels' wings, and they looked upon his face as if it were the face of an angel.

And what was it that Wordsworth told his listeners? He told them the world-old truth, that earth's greatest joy and beauty are centred in home; and he turned their eyes once more to that future of immortality, towards which the inarticulate yearning of the human spirit is stronger even than the yearning of passion. Over the natural world, in all the range and richness of its phenomena, he shed a sympathy, more loving, tender, thoughtful, saintly, than had ever been cast over it by any poet. He showed the heaven-light clothing the flowers of earth. With the love of a poet, and the reverence of a high priest, he looked upon the clouds until they smiled down on him unutterable love, and upon the little flowers until they woke in him thoughts too deep for tears. When he looked upon humanity it was rather to pity than to admire the beating of its mighty heart; and the materialism of his age shrunk abashed from the majesty of his disdain.

If this is true, it is not surprising, nor in any way to be regretted, that Wordsworth attained a lofty eminence of fame, and that he exercised an influence of vast potency over his age. But it would be highly absurd to permit it to blind us to the obvious, radical, and demonstrable defects of Wordsworth's poetry. His mind was irremediably wanting in all those qualities which give keenness and intensity to emotion, rapidity and practical force to thought, terseness and brilliancy to style. The absence from his mental composition of any sense of wit or humor was, in its completeness, scarcely human. If one may be pardoned the expression, his soul wanted crystalizing. Had you cleared his eye by one flash of that critical penetration which dwelt in the eye of Pope, had you edged his glance with one ray of that quick, piercing, caustic fire which belonged to Byron, how you would have enriched him! The value of wit, and of the critical faculty, is perhaps not so great to the world at large, as to their own possessor. They warn him, by silent, instinctive monitions, from the ridiculous, the childish, the inane. Such things as *The Seven Sisters* and *Ellen Irwin* are purely, perfectly, unapproachably bad. Parody is cheated by anticipation. We involuntarily exclaim, Every poet his own satirist! If a boy of nine had written *Ellen Irwin*, and died, it would hardly have been pardonable in his mother to publish it. No theory is here of any avail; no arguing can make feebleness impressive, or render art synonymous with commonplace. But for original defect of mind, no theory could have blinded Wordsworth himself to the absurdity of such rigmarole. But not only was the want of wit, humor, and the critical faculty deplorably manifest in Wordsworth. An honest and searching criticism must explicitly allow that he possessed neither the penetrative

and grasping imagination which seizes passion, nor the kindling, creative imagination, which gives life and personification. Of this last power, which I believe to be the reflection in man, as the image of God, of the Divine creative energy, and to which can therefore, with no lack of reverence, be applied the term which, immediately, could be applied to God alone, there is scarcely an instance, if there is one, in the whole range of Wordsworth's poetry.

Scott, Byron, and Wordsworth will mainly represent to posterity the great schools of British poetry which shed lustre over the earlier part of the nineteenth century. But these were not alone, nor is it certain that they produced the finest poetical pieces of the time. It would not be easy to make even the slightest descriptive reference to each of the men whose poetical genius, in its full vigor at that period, made their country and their age illustrious. A separate critique might well be devoted to the incomparable battle songs of Campbell, or to the stern, truthful, melodious wailings of Crabbe, or to the ornate erudition of Southey, or to the tuneful tenderness and brilliancy of Moore, or to the delicate, sportive, many-tinted fancies of Hogg, or even to the occasional vigor and intermittent glow of Wilson. Such, however, is here impossible.

But there are three poets to whom special allusion must be made, if not for their transcendent merits, at least for their influence on the poetry which is at present our particular object. I mean Coleridge, Keats, and Shelley. Although the collected poetry of Coleridge does not make a large volume, yet it may be asserted that in few if any more voluminous collections would a systematic critic find more instances of the exercise of genuine poetical genius, wherewith to illustrate his canons. In the Odes of Col-

ridge, in his *Religious Musings*, and scattered through other pieces, are to be found personifications, which have never been surpassed, and which it defies conception to improve. If I were asked what to me individually appears the most sublime piece of poetical description with which I ever met, in any writer, ancient or modern, British or foreign, I should point to these lines in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*:—

“ Still as a slave before his lord,  
The ocean hath no blast;  
*His great bright eye most silently*  
*Up to the moon is cast.*”

No purely realistic description could be conceived, comparable, in power and sublimity, to this. The silent, lorn, appealing look of the eye, is perhaps the most pathetic of all human expressions. In the mere transference of the wearied, despairing gaze of human agony to the ocean, there is an idea conveyed of solitude, dreariness, and woe, which concentrates the descriptions of a thousand calms. Whole poems are gathered up in this marvellous effort of the pure imagination. From the *Religious Musings* I might quote several instances of personification worthy of being compared with the above; but it is needless. It is sufficient to add that in rich and delicate melodiousness, in deep “inwoven harmony,” in aerial glow of coloring, there are passages in the poetry of Coleridge which defy description, and turn all praise to shame. There are touches in *Christabel* and *Genevieve* of a pure loveliness, dewy and roseate as the dawn, spirit-like, ethereal, indescribable.

Mr. Carlyle has in one of his essays incidentally characterized the genius of Keats as mere sensibility and random tunefulness of nature. The passage will remain perhaps

the most remarkable illustration in literature of the danger, even in the case of writers of great power and general caution, that lies in incidental expression of opinion on important points. Keats sunk into his grave ere he had attained the fulness of his years, pierced by the arrows of cruel mediocrity and withered by disease. Yet there is in his case no necessity to demand an arrest of judgment, on the plea that his genius was undeveloped. *Endymion*, indeed, was a youthful effort, and with all its delicate luxuriance of fancy, is not unmarked by boyish diffuseness, or even, perhaps, by boyish affectation. But *The Eve of St. Agnes* is no youthful effort: it may challenge comparison with anything of its kind ever written. There is a mellow yet transparent glow in its coloring, a finish and melody in its versification, a perfection of form and proportion in its whole execution, which belong exclusively to consummate skill. And what shall we say of *Hyperion*? Is that a youthful effort? Is that characterized only by sensibility and random tunefulness? Even in its present state it is one of the grandest things ever accomplished by the human intellect; and I hold it to be demonstrable that, if it had been finished as it was commenced, it would have found its place among the solitary masterpieces of the world, the greatest philosophical poem that exists. It is well that the central idea of the poem is so clearly indicated in the fragment we have, and that the general plan of the poetic treatment of this idea contemplated by the author is so distinctly suggested, that criticism can view the poem as it must have presented itself to the mind of the poet. The central idea is expressed in these words:—

“ ‘Tis the eternal law,  
That first in beauty shall be first in might;”

and the plan of Keats manifestly was, to exhibit the illustration of this idea afforded by the mythology of Greece. He intended to portray the procession of beauty, from mythology to mythology, and might have brought his whole poem to a glorious close with the transfiguration of all material loveliness in the spiritual beauty of Christianity. It is perhaps impossible to exaggerate the excellence of this idea or of this plan, whether philosophic depth or poetic capability be the ground of estimate. Of all the nations who have passed along the stage of time, the ancient Greeks are most closely associated with all that relates to beauty. In the practical working of the human mind, there never yet was bodied forth any manifestation of the Beautiful, to be for a moment compared, in the chasteness yet grandeur of its perfection, with the mythology of Greece. So intensely perceptive of the Beautiful were the Hellenic race, that it may be considered a philosophic and historical certainty, that it was the fact of their more chastened and delicate loveliness which secured to the Olympians, in preference to the Titans, the homage of the Greek mind. Keats had therefore chosen the very best means afforded him by human history, for setting forth the whole doctrine of the Beautiful in its own garb of beauty. This choice alone demonstrates the master mind. But the execution was, so far as it went, if possible, still more amazing. The colossal vigor of Michael Angelo, and the ethereal delicacy and sense of beauty of Raphael, unite in the wondrous delineations of *Hyperion*.

“Look up, and tell me if this feeble shape  
Is Saturn’s; tell me, if thou hear’st the voice  
Of Saturn; tell me, if this wrinkling brow,

Naked and bare of its great diadem,  
 Peers like the front of Saturn. Who had power  
 To make me desolate ? Whence came the strength ?  
 How was it nurtured to such bursting forth,  
 While Fate seemed strangled in my nervous grasp ?"

Is it absurd to say that we have here a terseness as of Shakspeare, and a majesty as of Milton ? Or to believe that, if the genius of Keats had fully developed in the direction in which it was unmistakeably tending, it might have won him an undisputed eminence, above all the poets who have arisen in Great Britain since the age of Milton ?

" Creüs was one ; his ponderous iron mace  
 Lay by him, and a shatter'd rib of rock  
 Told of his rage, ere he thus sank and pined.  
 Iapetus another ; in his grasp,  
 A serpent's splashy neck ; its barbed tongue  
 Squeezed from the gorge, and all its uncurl'd length  
 Dead ; and because the creature could not spit  
 Its poison in the eyes of conquering Jove.  
 Next Cottus : prone he lay, chin uppermost,  
 As though in pain ; for still upon the flint  
 He ground severe his skull, with open mouth  
 And eyes at horrid working."

Is that not a group which might have come from the chisel of Michael Angelo ?

" Have ye beheld the young god of the seas,  
 My dispossessor ? Have ye seen his face ?  
 Have ye beheld his chariot, foamed along  
 By noble winged creatures he hath made ?  
 I saw him on the calmed waters scud,  
 With such a glow of beauty in his eyes,  
 That it enforced me to bid sad farewell  
 To all my empire."

Are there not here touches worthy of the pencil of Raphael?

Consider also the might of the poetic imagination which devised, as the place of meeting for the fallen Titans, a scene like this:—

“It was a den where no insulting light  
Could glimmer on their tears; where their own groans  
They felt, but heard not, for the solid roar  
Of thunderous waterfalls and torrents hoarse,  
Pouring a constant bulk, uncertain where.  
Crag jutting forth to crag, and rocks that seemed  
Ever as if just rising from a sleep,  
Forehead to forehead held their monstrous horns.”

But does the thought—for thought must at times reveal itself in all poetry—which is to be found in *Hyperrion*, partake of juvenile excitement or feeble enthusiasm? The poem, to make use of an expression in itself, is throughout stubborned with the iron of most massive and manly thought.

“Be thou therefore in the van  
Of circumstance; yea, seize the arrow’s barb  
Before the tense string murmur.

\* \* \* \* \*

In thy face  
I see, astonished, *that severe content*  
*Which comes of thought and musing.*

\* \* \* \* \*

Now comes the pain of truth, to whom ’t is pain;  
O folly! for to bear all naked truths,  
And to envisage circumstance, all calm,  
That is the top of sovereignty.”

These and similar expressions have the true Shakspearian compactness, shrewdness, practicality, and strength. They embody the maxims on which the great silent workers of human history have proceeded. They amply demonstrate that the genius of Keats was no particular development, no mere sentimental rapture, thrilling in melodious flute-notes at sight of the Beautiful, but that his mind was at once mighty in its strength and symmetrical in its proportions; the two sides of the intellectual arch, reason and imagination, supporting and balancing each other. When Keats died at twenty-four, the grave closed over one of the greatest *men* of his time.

Keats died in 1820, aged twenty-four. Two years afterwards, a pale corpse was washed ashore in the Bay of Spezzia, with an open volume of the poetry of Keats in one of the pockets of its dress. It was the body of Percy Bysshe Shelley. His life had been six years longer than that of Keats, and his writings were far more extensive. But he died at thirty; and, in his case too, the rush and roll of the rising waters had not given place to the reposing strength of the full tide.

One is tempted, if but for a moment, to resign himself to that enthusiasm, which a first contemplation of the genius and history of Shelley so mightily awakens. Glowing with Platonic enthusiasms, confident that love burned in the heart of humanity, though to him it presented only a bosom cold as marble, moved by external loveliness to irrepressible, weeping ecstasy, the beautiful, gentle-hearted boy took up his lyre, and shook from it floods of wild, thrilling, ethereal melody. If it were at all safe or permissible to consider poetry a thing apart from the general life and the broad sympathies of mankind; if we could regard beauty in pure and remote abstraction, as a blend-

ing of prismatic hues on the central azure, where eye never looked and breath was never drawn; if it were not the instinctive declaration of every manly breast, echoed by all that is soundest in criticism, that what is most human is greatest; we might set the poems of Shelley above all the poetical productions of his time. But we are imperatively forbidden to yield to the impulse. Gazing, in finest frenzy, over the world, Shelley could not think that what he saw was a vision; he could not see that the film in his own eye softened the rugged features of men, and vailed the rocky sternness of the world in enchantment: but we dare not forget these facts. The human eye, accustomed to look upon clear, golden corn fields, and loving the simple, unvailed beauty of garden flowers, will ever behold, in much of Shelley's poetry, no more than the wavering and unhealthful scenery of dreams, or than "the pageantry of mist on an autumnal stream." Marvellous as is the wreathing of that mist, gorgeous as are the hues of its trailing draperies, men will continue to prefer the steady rainbow on the summer shower, and healthful criticism will not forget that mildew and pestilence may lurk behind those lighted folds.

*The Revolt of Islam*, Shelley's most extended and perhaps most elaborate work, must always be regarded as a wonderful achievement of genius. Its human groundwork is, indeed, supremely weak and puerile. A nation is set free, a great revolution is accomplished, by a promising young gentleman, somewhat mealy-mouthed, and a sentimental young lady, both promoters of the vegetarian movement. But considered as a mere allegory or idealization, in which light, Shelley, no doubt, wished it to be chiefly regarded, the poem loses much of its absurdity, and is seen to partake, in many places, of an epic grandeur.

What is very remarkable, it contains some of the strongest realistic word-painting in the language. Its descriptions of the plague turn the most terrible passages of Wilson's poetic drama on the same subject into infantile lisping.

*The Cenci* may be taken to mark an epoch in the development of Shelley's genius, in some respects corresponding to that marked by *Hyperion* in the case of Keats. It is, indeed, extremely improbable, that a mind, so superbly gifted in one set of faculties as Shelley's, should have proved ultimately and essentially defective in the stabler elements of intellectual power. However this may be, the severe majesty of *Hyperion* is hardly further removed from the loose-flowing exuberance of *Endymion*, than the human strength of *The Cenci* is from the gorgeous dreaming of *The Revolt of Islam*.

But I am inclined to think that, on the whole, the most perfect, and perhaps the most nobly characteristic, of the poems of Shelley, is the *Adonais*. It is an elegaic poem on the death of Keats. It is not, indeed, wholly undefaced by Shelley's peculiar dreaminess of fancy. But the theme is one capable of commanding universal sympathy, and its treatment is not such as to repel any mind gifted with a real sense of the Beautiful. The poem is no less classic in its symmetry and unity, than superb in its imagery. The dead poet lies under the blue Italian sky, the fitting charnel house for such an one as he. Nature mourns around him.

“ All he had loved and moulded into thought,  
From shape, and hue, and odor, and sweet sound,  
Lamented Adonais. Morning sought  
Her eastern watch-tower, and her hair unbound,  
Wet with the tears which should adorn the ground,

Dimmed the aërial eyes that kindle day;  
Pale ocean in unquiet slumber lay,  
And the wild winds flew around, sobbing in their dismay."

If absolute perfection could be predicated of any human thing, I should call that stanza perfect ; utterly faultless, at once in feeling, imagery, diction, and rhythm. The description of the poets who come to join their lamentations with those of nature is of corresponding excellence. The close is very sublime. In its majestic sadness, the stately Spenserian stanza reaches a swell and grandeur, perhaps unequalled in any passage in which it has ever been used.

"The breath whose might I have invoked in song  
Descends on me ; my spirit's bark is driven  
Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng  
Whose sails were never to the tempest given ;  
The massy earth and sphered skies are riven !  
I am borne darkly, fearfully afar ;  
Whilst burning through the inmost vail of heaven  
The soul of Adonais, like a star,  
Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are."

And words from the pen of Keats were probably the last which ever passed through the lips of Shelley !

The last tones of the grand old music had died away. Scott and Byron, Campbell and Coleridge, Keats and Shelley, had ceased to cast abroad their vocal spells ; and when men thought of Wordsworth, they thought less of an actually living man than of a marble bust, already in its niche of fame, the lips closed in majestic silence, never more deigning to solicit their applause. The heart of the British nation had ceased to throb with the excitement of the war. Napoleon had died amid the wail of the far Atlantic, his sceptre wrested from his grasp, and only

the gleam of his vanished armies to flit before his eye as it flickered in the last delirium. The death of Napoleon was the termination of the great historical drama, whose first act opened in the Hall of the States General at Versailles in 1789. A period of greater stillness, particularly in Great Britain, succeeded; a period marked by no poetic fertility, and in which poetry ceased to take the lead in popular literature, but one in which many influences were working towards undefined issues, and which brought to light, in various quarters, more piercing and delicate thought, a deeper reflectiveness, and a more refined culture, than had been apparent in the stirring time which went before. In the province of philosophy, the essays of Hamilton marked the introduction of a profounder erudition and a more searching analysis. Carlyle's essay on Burns may be considered the first of a series of biographical studies by that author, which must accomplish a revolution in our mode of viewing man, and, by consequence, in our mode of writing history: a revolution in the course of which the whole theory of man and his ways, accepted from French philosophism, and illustrated in such writings, marvellous in many respects, as the history of Gibbon, cannot fail to be crumpled up like a faded map and flung aside. Mainly, also, through the labors of Mr. Carlyle, the influence of the last great outburst of German poetry and philosophy entered, more deeply than it had previously done, into the agencies by which the most powerful young minds of Great Britain were directed. But as yet there was no poetic voice in which the blended influences of the time combined in cunning harmony, and which expressed the most delicate result of its refined and reflective culture. For such a voice, the nation waited.

In 1830 and 1832 there issued successively, from the

publishing establishment of Mr. Moxon of London, two poetical volumes. The critics of the olden time looked at them, sniffed lightly, uttered a few words of angry contempt, and passed on. Here and there an eye glistened, as at the streaks of a new dawn. Here and there an ear hearkened, as to the sound of a new and trancing melody. But the great body, even of the cultivated portion of the people, was unmoved. Year after year went on. Gradually, imperceptibly, surely, a change was wrought. The light which had touched the highest intellectual mountain-tops crept slowly but certainly down towards the lower grounds. The fact at length dawned broadly upon the intellect of the nation that an eye had once more been opened on the Beautiful, that a fresh revelation of loveliness was being made, that a great poet had arisen. That poet was Alfred Tennyson. After all that philosophers have said, the essentially correct definition of poetry in the concrete is, The Beautiful in sight wedded to the Beautiful in sound. Alfred Tennyson, it was perceived, was gifted with an original perception of the Beautiful in man and in nature, and with an original power of melody by which to constrain men to gaze upon his visions. It was found, too, that, under whatever strange and new conditions, the new poet shared the sympathies of his time. His poetry was, as that of every great poet more or less is, reflexive of the feelings and characteristics of his age; not necessarily of the most common or even the strongest, but certainly of some and those distinctive. A movement may be traced in the literary public of Great Britain of that period. The vast body of readers which had found intellectual enjoyment in the poetry of Scott and of Byron had divided into two great portions. The one, and by far the larger, ceasing to discover in the poetry of the day that passionate excitement

which had been found in the poetry of Scott and Byron, had betaken itself to prose, mainly to the works of Dickens and his brother novelists. The other, educated by such influences as those at which we have glanced, and with literary tastes refined by a familiar and meditative acquaintance with the poetry of the previous period, sought after a more exquisite and costly intellectual pleasure than could be yielded by such writers as Dickens. Such a pleasure was afforded in the poetry of Tennyson. That poetry reflects the most delicate civilization of the second quarter of the nineteenth century; its dainty elegance, its critical fastidiousness, its reflective musing, its slumbering might. The time, as I said, was one less of new emotion or aspiration, than of musing upon emotions and aspirations which had entered the world of mental influence in the preceding years; and in the poetry of Tennyson, to use an image furnished by itself, all those thunder-clouds of doubt, fear, and ambition, which had long been roofing the European world, were still visible, only they floated in an evening atmosphere, and had grown golden all about the sky.

The poetical schools of Great Britain during the first part of this century have passed cursorily before us; and I think the glimpses we had of them enables us, with sufficient decision, to trace the outline of Tennyson's poetical training. We can picture him first, in the enthusiasm of boyhood, hanging enraptured over the page of Scott or Byron. The solemn music of Wordsworth would then woo him to a loftier region and awaken him to a more spiritual enjoyment, the works of the two most popular poets of the age ceasing to satisfy the highest cravings of his nature. Coleridge, Keats, and Shelley would afford that nourishment and that delight to his strictly poetical taste, of which he was in quest. The great poets of a

former age, Shakspeare, Milton, and whoever were greatest among their predecessors and successors, would not, of course, have escaped his studious attention.

It may be said that these remarks are superfluous, since, in an age of culture, every poet may be concluded to have made himself master of the poetic wealth of his country. But I am impressed with the idea that an altogether peculiar relation subsists between the poetry of Tennyson and that of the great masters by whom he was preceded, more especially of those near his own time. The spirit of former schools appears to me to have passed into his poetry, determining its character though undergoing perfect transformation. If, to change the figure, I might imagine the great poets of the language pouring the contributions of their genius into one golden chalice, I should call the poetry of Tennyson a delicately tinted, exquisitely refined foam, mantling on the top. This comparison, I need hardly say, does not necessarily assign to Tennyson a higher place than belongs to any of the poets who preceded him. You may excel any number of masters in single effects, yet be, on the whole, inferior to them all. On this point I do not speak. Nor does the figure impugn the essential originality of Tennyson's genius. Originality is to be judged by the result: so long as the hues of the flower are blended in the unity of life and nature, and compel you to feel the magic and freshness of their beauty, you cannot affect its essential newness by naming its scientific elements, or by telling how the soil was dressed in which it grew. But bearing these things in mind, it is an interesting and quickening application of the critical faculty, to trace, in the poetry of Tennyson, the effects of that complex influence under which his genius developed. His figures are more definite in form and more finished in detail than those of Scott: but

in the bright, wandering gleams from the days of chivalry, which flit across the page of Tennyson, may we not detect the influence of the great romancer of Scotland? In his occasional bursts of passion, may we not, though dubiously, suffer ourselves to be reminded of Byron? The spirit of Wordsworth is ever near, as a mild, pervading presence; breathing not only in the high and unsullied morality, but perceptible at times, in idyllic passages of liquid sweetness, in a whispered suggestion of Wordsworthian childishness. The influence of Coleridge and Shelley we can hardly err in discovering in the delicate harmony and inwoven richness of the versification, perhaps, also, in the choice of imagery. Nor must we fail to recollect those foreign influences to which allusions has been made, as playing an important part in moulding the ideas of the most cultivated minds in the period of Tennyson's education. The poetry of Dante became then the object of very careful study, and the manner of Dante, the sternest of poetical realists, is perpetually exhibited in the poems of Tennyson. That intense realization too, of the idea of art, which was represented by Goethe, and that absolute elaboration which his works exhibit, had beyond question left an ineffaceable impression on the mind of Tennyson. But of all the teachers of Tennyson, there was none with whose genius his own was more strictly consonant, or whom he has, or appears to have more diligently studied, than John Keats. So close, indeed, is the affinity between the poetical genius of Tennyson and that of Keats, that the mention of the latter conducts us naturally to what must be the central problem in a critique on any poet, the question as to what is the particular quality and order of his imagination.

A true to philosophers. If we once permitted ourselves to dive into the subterranean regions of discussion, analysis,

and definition, we should emerge into the fair fields and open skies of objective poetry, only with jaded limbs and exhausted patience. Whether there is an essential difference between fancy and imagination, in what exact sense imagination can be pronounced creative, whether its operation is of the nature of that of the reason, conscious and deliberate, or of the nature of dreams, involuntary and hardly conscious, are questions on which I may have a decided opinion or not, but which I beg leave not to discuss at present. Our object will be attained with equal completeness, and far greater comfort, by considering merely two modes, broadly discriminated and perhaps all-embracing, in which different poets produce their effects, or in which the same poets write on different occasions.

The first of these modes might be styled that of the imagination stimulative: the second that of the imagination delineative. The one deals in bold, dashing, single strokes. It casts a flash of light over a wide surface of country, causing every mountain ridge, every valley stream, every castled crag, to gleam for a moment on the eye, but revealing no geographical details. It evokes the imagination of the reader, by striking but comparatively indefinite epithets. It says a face was lovely, a storm terrible, a lake beautiful; but it does not dwell on the "snow-and-rose-bloom" in the maiden's face, it does not particularize the terrors of the storm, it does not speak of every cloud that wandered over the lake, or mention the flowers that glassed themselves in its mirror. It runs with wizard hand over a thousand cords of association, sympathy, affection, touching the string but trusting to nature for the vibration. Not so with imagination in her other mood. She then seems to draw near to the painter, that she may imitate the definiteness of his colors, to the sculptor, that

she may reach the perfection of his forms. She exhausts her subject. She deals in measurement and detail. Her aim is not to arouse but to satisfy, not to stimulate but to delineate; or if both to rouse and stimulate, then by the effect of minute and elaborate painting.

But old Hume reminds me that criticism will not be of much use until it deals in abundant instance and illustration. I shall attempt, therefore, to make good my position, respecting the modes of imaginative operation which I have defined, and to afford illustration of those modes, by one or two references and citations. I premise that, as there is no such thing as a mathematical line in nature, neither have we here an exact boundary line. No poet has ever exhibited either of the imaginative modes to the complete exclusion of the other. Some poets exhibit both in proportions difficult to define. But certain poets lean so manifestly towards the one, and others so generally to the other, that the fact affords a satisfactory means of classification.

Of imagination stimulative, I suppose Homer would be cited as having furnished examples hardly to be surpassed. The old man is of course garrulous and minute, but he is fond also of the single flash, of the daring sweep, of the word that kindles a whole dawn, of the comparison which evokes a whole shadowy host of thoughts, sympathies, imaginings. His heroes are so often lion-like! His many sounding sea draws on our imagination so endlessly! Stentor bawls as loud as fifty; a great indefinite bellow, only beyond the reach of any dozen of ordinary mortals. Achilles wanders by the surf, looking unutterable things, but the curtains of his sublime sorrow are not drawn. Milton, with all his austerity, and though his rhythm is as the measured and martial music of angelic armies, is one

of the greatest masters of this form of imagination. Generation after generation will ponder his immortal words, and every new form of apprehension, distress, dismay, terror, or the reverse, that the ages exhibit, will be compelled by his irresistible imagination to minister to its ends. The eyes of men will ever peer into that "darkness visible," and never will they cease to discover in it

" sights of woe,  
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace  
And rest can never dwell."

Celestial music ever new in tone, celestial fragrance never to be exhausted, breathe round his Raphaels and Uriels; and the deep scars of thunder, sublimely indefinite, will never cease to be gazed at, with awe and terror, on the brow of the fallen Angel. But the finest example of this form of imagination in existence is beyond question the description of the horse in Job. "Hast thou given the horse strength? hast thou clothed his neck with thunder? canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper? the glory of his nostrils is terrible. He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men. He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword. The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield. He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage; neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet. He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha! and he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains and the shouting." There is, under all this description, a stern and accurate realism. The abstract qualities of the horse, his strength, courage, and the majesty of his movements, are discerned with unerring truth. But what words can

express the wonder with which we silently look upon the final picture! If the impressions of a thousand differently constituted minds could be recorded after surveying the marvellous portraiture, each set of impressions would prove different, yet every mind, if capable of being moved at all, would have been stirred to its depths. By the very freedom which is accorded to the impressions of the individual beholder, imagination is laid under a spell which will make it work in all climes and countries forever.

Dante and Spenser belong to the class of imaginative *delineators* perhaps as obviously as any poets of the whole past. Mr. Macaulay has contrasted Milton and Dante on essentially the same grounds as those on which we are at present dividing poets into two classes. The poet of Florence, whose face we see in his portraits, staring on there, as if, with unblenching earnestness, it would look through the very sky, seems to have disdained the ministry of the imagination of his fellows. Cold, stern, determined, he graved, with a pen of iron, to the last line, and then left his writing in the rock forever. Spenser is equally minute, but there is no sternness in Spenser. Dante finishes, because his proud austerity will leave no touch to be added by any other finger, because he scorns toil and pain, and yearns after hard actual truth. Spenser finishes because he loves, or because his genial all-embracing humor makes him never tire of any figure, however grotesque or monstrous, which he has once evoked. He will not lose one of the smiles of Una. He loves every tree of the forest, and gives you the name of each. If he stands on a heaven-kissing hill, he is so enraptured with the beauty of earth and heaven, that he must needs tell you of every cloud in the sky and every flower in the meadow. Even when he yokes unsightly creatures in hideous cars, he does not get

angry with them : he looks and lingers, and describes, laughing, perhaps, a quiet laugh.

Shakspeare will afford, wherever we choose to open, admirable examples of both our forms of imaginative exertion.

“ Ay, every inch a king :  
When I do stare, see how the subject quakes ! ”

These words of Lear are a magnificent example of the imagination that awakens and stimulates. There is nothing of kingly dignity, of imposing presence, of majesty to awe, and power to terrify, which you cannot associate with that line and a half. The description of Dover Cliff, almost immediately preceding, is a specimen, though not so pure, in the other kind. The suggestive imagination insinuates its voice in a whisper; but the closeness of detail is sufficient for illustration.

“ How fearful  
And dizzy 'tis, to cast one's eyes so low !  
The crows, and choughs, that wing the midway air,  
Show scarce so gross as beetles : half way down  
Hangs one that gathers samphire ; dreadful trade !  
Methinks he seems no bigger than his head.  
The fishermen, that walk upon the beach,  
Appear like mice ; and yon tall anchoring bark,  
Diminished to her cock ; her cock, a buoy  
Almost too small for sight : the murmuring surge,  
That on the unnumbered idle pebbles chafes,  
Cannot be heard so high : — I'll look no more ;  
Lest my brain turn, and the deficient sight  
Topple down headlong.”

Of all the poets of the commencement of this century, John Keats exhibited, most distinctively and with the

greatest success, the second form of imaginative description. His intimacy with Leigh Hunt perhaps influenced him to adopt this style. The *Story of Rimini* by the former is a very fine specimen of rich, warm, detailed coloring. But *The Eve of St. Agnes* not merely casts the work of Hunt into utter eclipse but is one of the very finest examples of the style in existence. The opening stanza at once reveals imagination in her lingering, loving, particularizing mood.

“ St. Agnes’ Eve — Ah, bitter chill it was !  
The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold ;  
The hare limp’d trembling through the frozen grass,  
And silent was the flock in woolly fold :  
Numb were the Beadsman’s fingers while he told  
His rosary, and while his frosted breath,  
Like pious incense from a censer old,  
Seem’d taking flight for heaven without a death,  
Past the sweet Virgin’s picture, while his prayer he saith.”

But I need not scruple to quote once more the most wonderful passage in this wonderful poem, a passage which perhaps no poet but Keats could ever have written, which in the closeness of its detail is a perfectly distinctive example of the delineative imagination, and which, in the perfect loveliness of every tint, exhibits how rich a poetic effect can be produced by the imagination that so works.

“ A casement high and triple-arch’d there was,  
All garlanded with carven imageries  
Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass,  
And diamonded with panes of quaint device,  
Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,  
As are the tiger-moth’s deep-damask’d wings ;  
And in the midst, ’mong thousand heraldries,

And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,  
A shielded scutcheon blush'd with blood of queens and kings.

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,  
And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,  
As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon ;  
Rose bloom fell on her hands, together prest,  
And on her hair a glory, like a saint :  
She seem'd a splendid angel, newly drest,  
Save wings, for heaven : — Porphyro grew faint :  
She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.

Anon his heart revives : her vespers done,  
Of all its wreathed pearls her hair she frees ;  
Unclasps her warmed jewels one by one ;  
Loosens her fragrant boddice ; by degrees  
Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees :  
Half hidden, like a mermaid in sea weed,  
Pensive a while she dreams awake, and sees,  
In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,  
But does not look behind or all the charm is fled."

I must repeat that no poet of great genius belongs exclusively to either of the classes I have endeavored to discriminate. The general manner is, in *The Eve of St. Agnes*, unmistakeably marked: yet there might be cited from its stanzas example after example of those far-illuminating words and burning metaphors, which belong specially to the first kind of imaginative action. In turning to Tennyson, we must not expect a uniformity not to be found elsewhere, and perhaps inconsistent with powerful genius. But the order of his imagination is marked with a distinctness not admitting of doubt. It delights in detail, delineation, finish. Herein is found the key to a critical appreciation of the poet; the point of view from which, surveying all he has done, his true station among

masters in the same kind may be discovered. Broad as are the flashes of light which he casts at times across his page, exhaustless as is the suggestion which lurks in many of his metaphors, belonging as some of his entire poems do to the other class, it is side by side with Dante, Spenser, and Keats that he takes his stand. It was just about the time when his poetical genius was first growing into consciousness of its might, and in all probability looking earnestly for any aids, in the way of model or advice, to help its expansion, that Great Britain was awaking to a sense of the loss sustained in the death of Keats, and when that criticism, which had killed by its loud and indiscriminate censure, was hastening to mock by its loud and indiscriminate applause. I cannot but think, therefore, that Tennyson must have devoted to the works of Keats a close, deliberate, and emulous attention; nor do I know a better introduction to the poetry of the former than a familiar acquaintance with that of the latter. One might shrink from the comparison of Tennyson with the three great poets with whom I have classed him. My idea of his poetry, as an abstract of the perfections of other schools wrapped in the light of a new idealization, tends to repel even the suggestion of such a comparison. But I do not hesitate to say that in the works of our great living poet, there are traces of the supreme excellences of Dante, of Keats, and Spenser: the austere grandeur and painful finish of the Florentine, the classic taste and intellectual strength exhibited in *Hyperion*, and the mellowed splendor, the golden glow, the lavish opulence, of Spenser.

A glance, however cursory, at certain of the poems of Tennyson, is sufficient to prove and illustrate the preceding statements.

The *Recollections of the Arabian Nights*, one of the

most remarkable pieces in Tennyson's first volume, reminds one strongly of the *Lamia* of Keats. In that poem, the latter shrinks not from the most minute detail. He describes his hall of banquet with the accuracy of an inventory. You know how the flowers festoon from pillar to pillar, how every capital is wreathed, whether the vases are fluted or plain, where the light falls from every lamp. The youthful Tennyson, in the poem I first named, dreams himself away to a scene in the far East, when the Sultan is in the full blush of his glory, and gazes entranced on the floral and festal magnificence by which he finds himself surrounded. Dauntless in its consciousness of power, his imagination does not say *how* beautiful or grand was the eastern garden scenery; it tells precisely *what* that scenery was, it details each of its particular appearances. We may think it beautiful or not as we please: the poet merely tells us what he saw. No sooner is he afloat on the Tigris than we find that the gold of the shrines of Bagdat was fretted, and that the gardens were high walled. His shallop rustles through foliage that is low and covered with bloom, and the shadows, falling over the fragrant, glistening water, are not general, indiscriminate shadows, but the particular ones cast from the citron trees. When he passes from the river into the canal, he finds the outlet guarded by platans; the pillared palms make a vault above him as he glides along, and the sweet odors which attempt to climb heavenward are stayed beneath the dome of hollow boughs; the canal is rounded to a lake, and the silver-chiming music of the rills, that fall into the water from the green rivage above, seems to shake the sparkling flints beneath his prow; on either side of the lake are fluted vases and brazen urns, duly occupied by flowers, of which some drop low their crimson bells, while others are studded with disks and tiars;

and the bulbul sings in the coverture of the lemon grove. Getting ashore and leaving his boat hanging by its silver anchor, he is led on towards the pavilion of the Caliphat. The doors are of cedar, and are carved; they are flung inward over spangled floors; broad flights of stairs run up, and the balustrade is of gold; there are fourscore windows, which are lighted. At last he looks upon the great Sultan himself, and the author of the Court Circular, published next morning in Bagdat, could not have described more faithfully the *tout ensemble* of his Majesty.

“ Six columns, three on either side,  
Pure silver, underpropt a rich  
Throne of the massive ore, from which  
Down-droop’d, in many a floating fold,  
Engarlanded and diaper’d  
With inwrought flowers, a cloth of gold.  
Thereon, his deep eye laughter-stirr’d  
With merriment of kingly pride,  
Sole star of all that place and time,  
I saw him in his golden prime,  
The GOOD HAROUN ALRASCHID !”

*The Lady of Shallott, Ænone, Mariana in the Moated Grange*, and *Mariana in the South* need only to be named in order to recall the detail of their finishing. It is the hand of a pre-Raphaelite that draws the lines and brings out the tints. But it is needless to multiply examples. I choose one which will, I think, prove ample, and may be conclusive.

*The Palace of Art* is one of Tennyson’s most characteristic and marvellous works. If all his other poems were lost, I am persuaded that, from this alone could be defined the essential quality and order of his genius. Of its value

in philosophy, of the profundity or practical worth of the thought it embodies, I do not now speak. It is as an exhibition of Tennyson's mode of imaginative operation, that I regard it. But it is impossible to proceed except by quotation, since no summary could convey an adequate idea of its architectural detail. I begin, therefore, by citing the passage in which the erection of the Palace is described.

“A huge crag platform, smooth as burnish'd brass,  
I chose. The ranged ramparts bright  
From level meadow-bases of deep grass  
Suddenly scaled the light.

Thereon I built it firm. Of ledge or shelf  
The rock rose clear, or winding stair.

\* \* \* \* \*

Four courts I made, east, west and south and north,  
In each a squared lawn, wherefrom  
The golden gorge of dragons spouted forth  
A flood of fountain-foam.

And round the cool green courts there ran a row  
Of cloisters, branched like mighty woods,  
Echoing all night to that sonorous flow  
Of spouted fountain-floods.

And round the roofs a gilded gallery,  
That lent broad verge to distant lands,  
Far as the wild swan wings, to where the sky  
Dipt down to sea and sands.

From those four jets four currents in one swell  
Across the mountain streamed below  
In misty folds, that, floating as they fell,  
Lit up a torrent-bow.

And high on every peak a statue seem'd  
 To hang on tiptoe, tossing up  
 A cloud of incense, of all odor steam'd  
 From out a golden cup.

So that she thought, ' And who shall gaze upon  
 My palace with unblinded eyes,  
 While this great bow will waver in the sun,  
 And that sweet incense rise ?'

For that sweet incense rose and never fail'd,  
 And, while day sank or mounted higher,  
 The light, aërial gallery, golden rail'd,  
 Burnt like a fringe of fire.

Likewise the deep-set windows, stain'd and traced,  
 Would seem slow-flaming crimson fires  
 From shadow'd grots of arches interlaced,  
 And tipt with frost-like spires."

The structure, it must be seen, is conceived as a whole. It has the massiveness of architecture, its proportion, and its completeness. Roberts could not have rendered more minutely the aërial gallery, the statues on the top, or the Gothic windows with their frost-like spires. Contrast with Tennyson's description the following by Edgar Poe.

"In the greenest of our valleys,  
 By good angels tenanted,  
 Once a fair and stately palace,  
 Radiant palace, reared its head.

In the monarch Thought's dominion,  
 It stood there ;  
 Never seraph spread a pinion  
 Over fabric half so fair.

Banners yellow, glorious, golden,  
On the roof did float and flow."

With the respective merits of these delineations we have nothing to do. But how different they are! The great American poet awakens your imagination by the mention of radiant lights and floating banners. His palace is ideal, shadowy, touched with new hues by every imagination. Painters for many generations might attempt to portray it, and each canvass would exhibit an edifice bearing no traceable resemblance to any of the others. But Tennyson will have none of your palace: he builds you his own. If you paint it, you must be careful; if you painted it a hundred times, you would be constrained to make the great features the same. A crag platform, rising four-square from a plain of grass; a stream pouring over the face of the crag; a roof with peaks, on each of which stands a statue bearing incense; a bartizan faced by a golden railing:—these must enter into every attempt to paint the Palace of Art. We find, then, that the characteristic of Tennyson's delineation is extreme accuracy, minute architectural clearness. Yet the passage I have quoted would in general be pronounced obscure, and it is precisely in such passages that the difficulty of Tennyson's style is exhibited. I feel assured that the lines of Poe would, by the majority of readers, be pronounced the clearer of the two. How is this? The answer can be rendered with perfect decision. The general imagination is far more distinguished by excitability, than by definiteness of vision. The eye glances along the page, securing the mental impression, not realizing the separate pictures. This impression is what the stimulative imagination aims at, and the most popular poetry of all ages has therefore been the

work of the stimulative imagination. But it is quite impossible for the same sort of perusal to suit both the modes of imagination. In the one case, the single word or metaphor produces its own effect, and there an end. In the other case, word must find its word, stanza must be, swiftly or slowly, collated with stanza. If all the limbs and features of the body, in a human delineation, are specified in their true forms and colors; if all the parts of an edifice architecturally correspond; the scattered members can unite into one living frame, the separate courts and galleries into one palace. But if the delineative poet has, in the course of his perilous enumeration, put an arch where there should be a pillar, or a battlement where there should be a rampart, his edifice is strictly a heap of disjointed rubbish. If the reader's imagination refuses to follow the poet in meek obedience, the whole becomes, whether correct in itself or no, an unintelligible mass of confusion, or an unimpressive blank. The descriptions of Spenser, Keats, and Tennyson are literally too clear to be instantly comprehended; dark with excess of light. Only be silent and listen to such poets and they will tell you far more than that their mansions are stately, their forests rich in light and shade, their maidens sweet and rosy. The indefinite, flickering light of your own imagination is sternly shorn away: but by degrees the creation of the poet, resting calm as against the sky of dawn, every crystal spire unchangeably fixed, every golden pillar standing immovable, rises before you and remains forever.

It is a tempting question, which of these orders of delineation demands the greater power and is essentially the greater. Perhaps they are co-ordinate. I confess that, though the delight I have received from such descriptions as those of Spenser, Keats, and Tennyson, has been inex-

pressibly intense, I am inclined to yield to the voice of humanity, which has, in all ages, accorded supreme popularity to the poets of the first class. From Homer to Byron, those poets have exercised the most potent influence over the mass of men, whose touch has been sweeping, who have delighted in broad masses of shade and sunshine, who have scattered imaginative spells rather than finished imaginative pictures. Viewed abstractly, however, the case on the other side is exceedingly strong. If imagination works perfectly in every detail, and yet unites her whole composition in living harmony, is it fair to impugn the supremacy of her might, because the human eye, dazzled, it may be, by false glories, turbid through ignoble admirations, and incapable of a long, calm gaze, fails to take in the magnificent sweep of her lines, to perceive the elaborate correspondence of her colors? Beyond question, the higher the scale of culture, the higher is the pleasure found in the work perfect in its minuteness as well as in its majesty; beyond question, too, the poets who have delighted in such work, Dante perhaps excepted, have depended more, for their power of fascination, on their pure sense of beauty, than on the breadth of their human sympathies or power of general interest. The sense of abstract loveliness was possessed by Spenser and Keats as strongly and as exquisitely as by any men that ever lived. It might be urged, too, that, in this form of imaginative exertion, the sister Arts, poetry and painting, meet, while the indefinite imagination affords no forms or colors which the painter can follow. The ideal end of painting as an Art, and that of the Spenserian imagination,—to reveal beauty in perfect form and color,—are identical. Of all painters, in landscape at all events, Turner, on a great scale, and old David Cox on a less, have alone, so far as I

can remember, attempted in form and color the suggestiveness and mystery of the stimulative imagination. But here, it is to be feared, Poetry might step in, arrayed in her most gorgeous robes, and declare, with a smile of haughty disdain, that Turner and Cox merely struggled into her empyreal freedom above the constraints of the inferior Art, and that the imagination, which catches a gleam from the infinite, and transcends any definite form of color to be rendered by human hand, is, after all, the grander of the two.

The description of the palace in the poem we have been contemplating, is perhaps sufficient for our purpose. But every stanza is of the same order. A few of them I cannot forbear from quoting.

“ Full of great rooms and small the palace stood,  
All various, each a perfect whole  
From living Nature, fit for every mood  
And change of my still soul.

For some were hung with arras green and blue,  
Showing a gaudy summer-morn,  
Where with puff'd cheek the belted hunter blew  
His wreathed bugle-horn.

One seem'd all dark and red — a tract of sand,  
And some one pacing there alone,  
Who paced forever in a glimmering land,  
Lit with a low, large moon.

One show'd an iron coast and angry waves,  
You seem'd to hear them climb and fall,  
And roar rock-thwarted under bellowing caves,  
Beneath the windy wall.

And one, a full-fed river winding slow  
 By herds upon an endless plain,  
 The ragged rims of thunder brooding low,  
 With shadow-streaks of rain.

And one, the reapers at their sultry toil.  
 In front they bound the sheaves. Behind  
 Were realms of upland, prodigal in oil,  
 And hoary to the wind.

And one, a foreground black with stones and slags,  
 Beyond, a line of heights, and higher  
 All barr'd with long white cloud the scornful crags,  
 And highest, snow and fire.

And one, an English home—gray twilight pour'd  
 On dewy pastures, dewy trees,  
 Softer than sleep—all things in order stored,  
 A haunt of ancient Peace.

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Or sweet Europa's mantle blew unclasp'd,  
 From off her shoulder backward borne:  
 From one hand droop'd a crocus: one hand grasp'd  
 The mild bull's golden horn.

Or else flush'd Ganymede, his rosy thigh  
 Half-buried in the Eagle's down,  
 Sole as a flying star shot through the sky  
 Above the pillar'd town."

I doubt whether it is within the limit of possibility to bestow too high a commendation upon these delineations, unsurpassed as they are in the whole range of art. Each stanza is a poem. Each stanza exhibits a strength and

calmness of imaginative vision, a sense of symmetry and proportion, in one word a capacity to see and delineate the Beautiful, which would render it, if found separately, as infallibly demonstrative of supreme poetic genius. A single gem, of unparalleled loveliness, tells of the one mine in all the world where it can have been dug. Of the mastery of the English language which concentrated so many complete pictures into such frames it is needless to speak. But how distinctly traceable in every line is the hand of the finishing imagination! What can you add to that figure of Europa? Her mantle is unclasped and borne backward from her shoulder. The crocus droops from one hand; the other grasps the horn of the bull, the horn being golden and the bull mild. The one epithet which might be regarded as a signal of freedom to the imagination, "sweet," hardly releases you here, for you can imagine only a quiet, contented, hoping smile. This little picture has always seemed to me to reveal the genius of Tennyson to the very life,—Tennyson, his mark.

It would be a very delightful but is not a necessary task, to trace the imaginative action, of which I have said so much, through all the poems of Tennyson, whether his earlier or his later. For the present I confine myself to the former, and even of these I can in this connection say but a few words. Observe how the poet always gazes face to face upon what he portrays, how distinctly he hears every word falling from the lips of his characters. He never slurs, he never generalizes. Is he in his idyllic mood, wandering by the brook or among the hay-cocks? He sees the apple-blossom as it sails on the rill; the garden walk is bordered with lilac; the green wicket is in a privet hedge. He lets you hear the very words of the simple, kindly rustics, and you see the flowers plucked for the wreath

to bind the brow of the little child. Is it of affection or passion, in the depth of their tenderness or the might of their burning, that he speaks? He shows you the eyelid of the mother quivering, and every little flutter, of love and doubt, in the breast of the village bride. Or the irresistible emotion reddens over cheek and brow, like a northern morning, and the inmost secrets of the spirit dawn out in the dark of the hazel eye. He seems to track the blood in the veins as it courses from the heart to the cheek. The bride in *The Lord of Burleigh* has just heard the announcement, that the landscape painter whom she had loved is a great and wealthy noble. Tennyson does not say how she was impressed. He merely looks at her and reads off the signs on her face.

“ All at once the color flushes  
Her sweet face from brow to chin :  
As it were with shame she blushes,  
And her spirit changed within.

Then her countenance all over  
Pale again as death did prove.”

This is all. You hear, in a little, how she strove against her weakness, and addressed herself to her wifely duties, but of her feelings at the time you hear nothing. The characters in which nature wrote those feelings are set before the eye; and how vivid, how profound their portraiture, how delicate and deep their pathos!

Tennyson's diction and melody are in perfect harmony with his imaginative faculty. To describe his command of language, by any ordinary terms, expressive of fluency or force, would be to convey an idea both inadequate and erroneous. It is not only that he knows every word in

the language suited to express his every idea; he can select with the ease of magic the word that of all others is best for his purpose: nor is it that he can at once summon to his aid the best word the language affords; with an art which Shakspere never scrupled to apply, though in our day it is apt to be counted mere Germanism and pronounced contrary to the genius of the language, he combines old words into new epithets, he daringly minglest old colors to bring out new tints that never were on sea or shore. His words gleam like pearls and opals, like rubies and emeralds. He yokes the stern vocables of the English tongue to the chariot of his imagination, and they become gracefully brilliant as the leopards of Bacchus, or soft as the Cytherean doves. He must have been born with an ear for verbal sounds, an instinctive appreciation of the beautiful and delicate in words, hardly ever equalled. His earliest poems are festoons of verbal beauty, which he seems to shake sportively, as if he loved to see jewel and agate and almondine glittering amid tropic flowers. He was very young when he published the *Recollections of the Arabian Nights*; yet that piece displays a familiarity with the most remote and costly stores of the English language not exceeded in the same space by Spenser. If these expressions seem to any extravagant, I would beg to suggest a study of two poems; —I might name twenty. Consider *Eleanore* and *The Lotos Eaters*. Both these poems are every way characteristic of Tennyson, and illustrate admirably his imaginative method. I regard them, in respect of diction, as not only justifying every word I have said, but as putting utterly to shame my attempts to convey an adequate impression of Tennyson's power over words. Here I cannot quote single verses; for there are no degrees in perfection; and the most minute acquaintance with these

poems leaves me deliberately unable to point to a line in either, of which the diction is not absolutely perfect. In the case of *Eleanore* I can just imagine it objected, that the ambition of the diction overleaps itself and falls on the other side, that the skill of the poet, like the inimitable finish of Lewis on the dress of an uninteresting woman, is expended so lavishly on robes and jewelry, that the serene imperial Eleanore fails to concentrate our regard. But of *The Lotos Eaters*, this cannot be even argued. As you read that poem, you are so steeped in its golden langor, you are so overpowered by the trance-like joy of its calm, that you cannot think even of the spell that binds you. The force of language could no further go.

Tennyson's choice of measure, and general sense of rhythm and melody, correspond accurately with the order of his imagination, and the pearly delicacy of his diction. It, too, generally requires, for its full appreciation, an ear that will listen carefully, and even permit itself to be tuned to the melody. There is rarely that instantaneous attractiveness, which a well known measure, handled with any novelty or skill, is sure to possess; an attractiveness to be deemed analogous to that superficial beauty, which clearness and elegance impart to prints in annuals, and soft, well contrasted lights and shades to pictures generally. There is no reliance on antithesis, as is so common in the smaller lyrics of Byron. There is no courting of anapestic buoyancy, or voluptuous sweetness, as in the lyrics of Moore. In almost every case, the radical metrical foot is the iambus, that most deeply consistent with the genius of the English tongue, but that, also, affording the poet the least resource in dashing turns or sounding cadences, and forcing him to trust most exclusively to his real power, to the gold seen gleaming beneath the pellucid current of

his verse. *Locksley Hall* is a magnificent exception to Tennyson's general habit, its trochaic measure being superbly adapted for the expression of passion, and itself being incomparably the finest of trochaic melody in the language. But though Tennyson's measures are generally iambic, he breathes into them a melodiousness which is new, and gives them forms of his own. The stanza of *The Palace of Art* is quite new, and it is only by degrees that its exquisite adaptation to the style and thought of the poem is perceived. The ear instinctively demands, in the second and fourth lines, a body of sound not much less than that of the first and third; but in Tennyson's stanza, the fall is complete; the body of sound in the second and fourth lines is not nearly sufficient to balance that in the first and third; and the consequence is, that the ear dwells on the alternate lines, especially on the fourth, stopping there to listen to the whole verse, to gather up its whole sound and sense. I do not know whether Tennyson ever contemplated scientifically the effect of this. I should think it far more likely, and indicative of far higher genius, that he did not. But it appears to me that no means could be conceived for setting forth, to such advantage, those separate pictures, "each a perfect whole," which constitute so great a portion of the poem. Wherever the picture to be drawn is spread over several stanzas, or the same precise strain of feeling is kept up for so long, the form of the verse is felt to be by no means equally suitable, and the ear, accustomed to the deep rest of the full stop after the short line, will hardly consent merely to stop a moment at a comma, and then hasten to the succeeding verse. But it is a poor business analyzing verse like this, or attempting to reduce it to scientific rules. It is like trying to convey an idea of a flower, by enumerating its stamens and tissues,

or by presenting it, dried and shrivelled, with its name beside it, in some adust herbarium: instead of holding it up to the living eye, arrayed in that dress of purple, or blue, or scarlet, which God taught it to weave for itself from the sunbeams, or inhaling that fragrance, which eludes, like a spirit, the rude touch of science. Better is it, in thinking of the melodiousness of Tennyson's poetry, to recall those hours, so intensely, so serenely happy, when gradually the ear came under its spell: when the miller's daughters, and gardener's daughters, first glided into the field of vision, to tender, mildly cheerful music; when the *Dream of Fair Women*, and *The Lotos Eaters*, and *The Palace of Art*, almost hushed the beatings of the heart, at the flute-like softness and dreamy calm of their melody; when the tropic lightnings of passion first flashed amid the thunder of *Locksley Hall*; or when the great autumnal sorrow of *In Memoriam*, voiced itself in a rhythm, solemn and majestic as the roll of the melancholy main. The melody of Tennyson's poems is perhaps more peculiarly his own even than his other characteristics; it is still more difficult than in the case of these, to find its prototype in preceding English poetry.

We have hitherto, strictly speaking, considered only the methods and appliances of Tennyson's genius. His form of imaginative exertion, his diction, and his melody, are perfectly separable, in critical consideration, from the emotions he portrays, the thought he utters, or the new aspects of nature's beauty to which he opens our eyes. Expression is, in a sense, everything in poetry, as painting is in a sense everything in the pictorial Art: in the sense, namely, that, whatever thought and feeling may be exhibited, without metrical expression, in the one, or pictorial expression, in the other, loses the distinctive characteristic, however much

it may retain of the general character, of either. Yet expression can never be all in all, whether in painting or in poetry. Some association, however we may define it, with the world of human thought and feeling, is indispensable. The perfect tones of a prism will never be to man as the imperfect tones of a picture; and the pure notes of music are vacant of influence, until, by combination into melodies, they attain the power of touching the mystic chords of association. Whatever the conditions prescribed by the nature of each Art, there is no Art in which it is not necessary that there be a something related to its expression as substance is related to form. Here again, the genius of metaphysics beckons us to answer a few stiff and ancient questions, touching the nature of those truths, of experience, of feeling, of reason, which may be pronounced necessary in poetry. What, asks that menacing presence, is the connection between the Good, the Beautiful, and the True? Are Science and Poetry one, or are they different, and how? Happily Poetry has not the unreasonable habit of that beautiful but whimsical lady, the Sphynx. Poetry does not insist upon our explaining the riddle of the nature, or any other riddle, before enjoying the benignity of her smile. But our present business is criticism, and a word or two, as to the relations of Poetry and Science, may render us important assistance as we proceed.

Professor Wilson pronounced Poetry to be "the true exhibition, in musical and metrical speech, of the thoughts of humanity when colored by the feelings, throughout the whole range of the physical, moral, intellectual, and spiritual regions of being." As a definition of poetry, this might be open to objection, but as a definition of poetry by Professor Wilson, it is of value. Wilson's scientific capacity was perhaps as feeble as his dramatic. But he was the greatest sympathetic critic that ever used the English lan-

guage, the man most thoroughly capable, through delicacy, power, and range of sympathy, to discover and appreciate poetic excellence. Nor was he ever tempted, by over-refinement of sensibility, or sickly admiration for any particular mannerism, to abandon the broad canons of criticism which base themselves on deep and universal laws of human nature. He is pre-eminently fitted to represent the cultivated but healthy human mind, as affected by poetry. Viewing him in this capacity, importance must be attached to his words. When thought is contrasted with feeling, as he contrasts it, it must have reference to truth. Thoughts without any substantial basis of truth are valueless or inconceivable. And Professor Wilson's words clearly indicate that, in regarding poetry, he experienced an instinctive craving for this substantial truth, whether as recorded in experience or construed to reason.

The view of Goethe and his school in Germany, adopted by Mr. Carlyle, touching the relation between the True and the Beautiful, between Poetry and Science, I understand to be, that Poetry, in its true essence and noblest realization, presents the truths of reason in the forms of sense. The mere expression of such an opinion indicates the necessity felt by such thinkers as Goethe and Carlyle to discover, in the last resort, some intimate, indissoluble alliance between the True and the Beautiful.

But it is unnecessary to make any parade of authorities on this point. The right doctrine can be reached without any painful consultation of Aristotle, Bacon, and the rest. When understood in its proper sense, it will be universally conceded as an axiom, that truth is inseparable from every sound form of composition. But what is truth? of what does it consist? It may all be classed under two categories, each containing two divisions:—

1. (a) *What* is ; (b) *What* may supposably, in change of time or condition, be.

2. (a) *How* what exists is ; (b) *How* the supposably existent would be.

All Art has, as its subject matter, truth of the first category : all Science truth of the second.

There is nothing here in the slightest degree obscure, or difficult of comprehension. Goethe and Carlyle, in recognizing the essential connection between poetry and form, lend us really their support ; their antithesis between truth of reason and form of sense can alone be rightly interpreted, in accordance with our categories ; only I think that, by fairly recognizing truth as equally independent of poetry and science, we are secured from certain errors, into which a definition of poetry simply as the truths of reason in the forms of sense might lead us. It would be erroneous to give any countenance to the idea that poetry receives certain truths from reason, attained by the method of logic, and proceeds to clothe them in the forms of sense. We should thus find ourselves identifying Art with allegory ; a peril not altogether escaped in the poetry of Schiller, and surely affecting the rugged truthfulness of *Wilhelm Meister*. I shall not, however, enter here into any debate. Concluding that the antithesis suggested by Mr. Carlyle is the key to the whole subject, and professing merely to interpret and formally apply it, we shall find the division I have made sufficient for the classification of all Art and all Science, whether real or ideal.

Art, then, always deals with what is, or with what may be. Its postulate is that nothing is, or may be imaginatively represented, which is not worthy of observation. It is divided into realistic and ideal. Realistic Art concerns itself with what is ; its subject matter is the now existent

universe : ideal Art concerns itself with the world of imagination ; its subject matter is all that the imaginative faculty calls up in vision, looks forward to in hope, or combines into new creations. The ultimate attainment of realistic Art would be, by all-embracing, all-potent observation, by all-penetrating, all-compelling imagination, to body forth, in form, motion, color, the existent universe, animate and inanimate. The last achievement of ideal Art would be, to represent, not in theory but in fact, a perfect universe. It would set before us, with Plato, the world of the idea, with the idea at last perfectly expressed in form ; it would show us that "type of perfect in the mind," for which Tennyson looked in vain in nature ; in an expressly Christian scheme of things, it would exhibit humanity re-adorned in its paradisal garments, in a world fitted to such a race, or robed in a purer whiteness than that of Paradise, on the plains of heaven. The province of Art is thus shown to be commensurate with the powers of the human intellect, and the regions of the finite.

Turning to Science, there is no more difficulty in discriminating between real and ideal Science, than between real and ideal Art. The utmost conceivable perfection of realistic Science would be formally to construct, from its elements, the whole material universe, of nature and of man,— to trace, in all their operations, the laws by which it consists. Ideal Science is not so familiar to our conceptions as ideal poetry. But if we do concede it a sphere, its ultimate achievement is definable as the exhibition, in its forming and sustaining laws, of possible perfection. A perfect *theory* of Plato's ideal world, a perfect *theory* of man and nature renewed by Christianity, would precisely answer to this.

The grand antithesis between Art and Science is that of

form and law, of result and cause, of representation and dialectic, of the visible and invisible. Art looks; her guide, from star to star, is the cherub contemplation: Science investigates. Art depicts; Science records.

This distinction is available for important practical purposes.

It enables us, to begin with, to perceive how and why it is that Art is associated inseparably with the Beautiful, while Science has no essential connection with beauty whatever. Science deals with what nature does not *show*. She lifts the green turf of the mountain, to investigate the strata; she divides the ray of light, to examine its separate filaments; she lays open the cheek of beauty, to trace the course of the arteries. She is entirely conversant with those processes and those forms, by contrast with which nature produces her final effects of beauty. Science, therefore, save in the work of discovering and classifying perfected forms hitherto unobserved, has no office whatever in connection with the Beautiful. But Art has to do only with what is *seen*, whether by the eye of sense or of imagination. She gazes enraptured on the dress of nature, intended to be admired: that garment, woven by the hand of God, ineffable in its beauty, in which the purple of night, dark against the star-fires, the green of earth, touched with crimson and gold, the blue of ocean wreathed with tinted foam, the azure of the sky, flushed with dawn and even, and hung with broidered vails of cloud, combine in one picture of sublimity and loveliness, over which the angels clap their hands, and on which we of the earth can never gaze with sufficient wonder and earnestness. All that Art can see of the untainted workmanship of God is beautiful. Wherever the shadow of sin has come, a blight has passed over beauty. In humanity, in world-history, Art does not

find all beautiful. But beauty is bound up in the purpose of the ages ; the Good, the True, the Beautiful struggle on together, to celestial music, through the night of time ; with every new throb of the heart of mankind towards a higher life and a loftier nobleness, a fresh glory and loveliness passes, as it were a blush, along its countenance. At the meridian splendor of this loveliness, ideal Art guesses and gazes from afar. And thus Art's function, whether in the real or the ideal, is ever with the Beautiful.

But, next, does not our antithesis explain the fact that, in all ages, pleasure has been associated with Art, that the poetic nature finds delight in external nature, and that a magnificent, rapturous ease is the mood deemed appropriate to poetic composition ? The forms of God's universe are fitted, with sublime beneficence, to impart joy. God willed that whatsoever countenance, of man or angel, unstained by sin, looked upon his world, should break into a smile. God said let there be light ; and morning drawing aside the veil of night will ever continue the emblem of joy, because it shows us, once more, that world which then flashed into visibility and beauty. The fact that the contemplation of external loveliness is productive of joy cannot be called in question ; and we may view it either as a proof that the Creator of the universe is good, or as a proof that the God of Christianity is the God of Nature. I am perfectly assured that whosoever has spoken of the exercise of the poetic faculty, whether in the case of Milton, Dante, or Goethe, as something arduous, difficult, painful, has erred. To all earnest and honest labor a joy is annexed ; there is pleasure, if not in the preliminary toil, at least in the ultimate discovery, of science : but in true poetic composition, the joy approaches rapture. The fine frenzy that Shakspeare saw in the eye of the poet was unquestionably

a frenzy of joy. De Quincey, in his own fashion of flinging abroad, with princely recklessness, hints that lighten over wide regions of thought, remarks that the life of poetic enthusiasm, which Coleridge led during his youth, unfitted him for the sternness of life and made him an easy victim to opium. He required, says De Quincey, finer bread than was baked with wheat. The observation is pointedly true in the case of Coleridge: and doubtless the irregular lives of poets, and their inability in general to grapple steadily with the difficulties of life, are to a great extent traceable to the insipidity with which every day realities must present themselves, after the rapturous excitement of imaginative vision.

Truth then, to return, is of the essence of poetry as well as of science. But in the one case, the truth is always enveloped in form; in the other it is eliminated from form. Science gives you truth in algebraic formula; poetry gives you truth in the dance of the stars. A Newton is mighty in the exposition of law, a Shakspeare in the exhibition of fact, of human and physical nature as actually existing or as seen under the revealing idealization of his imaginative genius. An Aristotle applies a powerful analysis to the laws of morals; a Milton exhibits those grand revolutions, in human and angelic existence, in which the might and grandeur of moral law have been displayed.

But it is necessary to guard here against a misapprehension. We are so apt to associate everything with inference and lesson, that when we talk of truth in Science or Art, we almost irresistibly think of some expressly didactic moral. But it hardly admits of question, that neither Science nor Art is by nature bound to acknowledge the justice of the claim thus implied. Truth in visibility is all Art professes to give: truth in law all we can require of

Science. Science may investigate the laws of cookery, or those of the heavenly bodies: and her dignity, no doubt, increases as she ascends. Art may delineate the wayside weeds, or pencil out the lightest bodyings of fancy,—the reveries of the child, the dance of the fairies; she may represent also the mountains that steady the earth, the armies that have shaken the plains of heaven: and her greatness, too, increases as her subjects are ennobled. But as to express moralizing, Science may be dumb as the pyramids, and Art silent as the dew.

It is necessary, also, once more to recollect that neither is there here a mathematical line of demarcation. Art and science, realism and idealism, perpetually mingle in the concrete example.

Tennyson's right to a place among the really great poets of the human race is vindicated by this fact, That he has looked, as a great man might, upon what is most distinctive in the age in which he writes, and that he has bodied forth the result with marvellous poetic realization. This I proceed briefly to establish.

One good example may at times convey, expressly or by implication, a whole argument. I choose here one illustration of Tennyson's truth-grasping power, which seems to me to necessitate the conclusion that he is a great poet, in the sense of seeing and poetically embodying great truths. It is the same as that I selected as a perfectly satisfactory illustration of his peculiar imaginative method, *The Palace of Art*. When we contemplate this poem, what do we behold? We see a human being, represented by the soul of the poet, separating from the rest of the world, and going to dwell in a palace apart. This palace is gorgeously constructed. Its roofs gleam with gold. Its courts echo with fountains. A torrent-bow is lit up from the edge of

the crag on which it is built. The interior is adorned with the most rich, refined, and elaborate magnificence. The eye can rest on no spot from which there does not come an answering beam of beauty. In the towers are great bells, moving of themselves with silver sound. Through the painted windows, stream the lights, rose, amber, emerald, blue. Between the shining Oriels, the royal dais is placed, hung round with the paintings of wise men, and there the inmate takes her throne, to sing her songs in solitary beatitude.

“No nightingale delighteth to prolong  
 Her low preamble all alone,  
 More than my soul to hear her echo’d song  
 Throb through the ribbed stone;

Singing and murmuring in her feastful mirth,  
 Joying to feel herself alive,  
 Lord over Nature, Lord of the visible earth,  
 Lord of the senses five :

Communing with herself: ‘All these are mine,  
 And let the world have peace or wars,  
 ’T is one to me.’ She—when young night divine  
 Crown’d dying day with stars,

Making sweet close of his delicious toils—  
 Lit light in wreaths and anadems,  
 And pure quintessences of precious oils  
 In hollow’d moons of gems,

To mimic heaven; and clapt her hands and cried,  
 ‘I marvel if my still delight  
 In this great house so royal-rich and wide,  
 Be flatter’d to the height.

O, all things fair to sate my various eyes!

O, shapes and hues that please me well!

O, silent faces of the Great and Wise,

My Gods with whom I dwell!

O, God-like isolation which art mine,

I can but count thee perfect gain,

What time I watch the darkening droves of swine

That range on yonder plain!

In filthy sloughs they roll a prurient skin,

They graze and wallow, breed and sleep;

And oft some brainless devil enters in,

And drives them to the deep.'

Then of the moral instinct would she prate,

And of the rising from the dead,

As hers by right of full-accomplished Fate;

And at the last she said :

'I take possession of man's mind and deed.

I care not what the sects may brawl.

I sit as God, holding no form of creed,

But contemplating all.''\*

Thus it continues for three years. Then, suddenly, all is changed. The proud soul is smitten from the height of her glory into sore despair. A darkness and a pestilence pass over the beauty with which she is surrounded. She cannot comprehend how the woe has come, but her palace is now an abode of loathing and ghastliness.

"'What! is not this my place of strength,' she said,

'My spacious mansion built for me,

Whereof the strong foundation stones were laid

Since my first memory?'

\* Quoted from the tenth edition.

But in dark corners of her palace stood  
 Uncertain shapes; and unawares  
 On white-eyed phantasms weeping tears of blood,  
 And horrible nightmares,

And hollow shades enclosing hearts of flame,  
 And, with dim fretted foreheads all,  
 On corpses three months old at noon she came,  
 That stood against the wall.

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Back on herself her serpent pride had curl'd.  
 ‘No voice,’ she shrieked in that lone hall,  
 ‘No voice breaks through the stillness of the world:  
 One deep, deep silence all !’”

At last the end comes :—

“ She howl'd aloud, ‘ I am on fire within.  
 There comes no murmur of reply.  
 What is it that will take away my sin,  
 And save me lest I die ? ’

So when four years were wholly finished,  
 She threw her royal robes away.  
 ‘ Make me a cottage in the vale,’ she said,  
 ‘ Where I may mourn and pray.’”

In all this—in the whole of the poem,—with its perfect symmetry, and that elaborate fullness of beauty which isolated quotations so defectively represent—it is just possible that certain persons may not find any great truth revealed. Stated in so many words, the poem does not contain a single didactic lesson. The poet-nature of Tennyson, instinct with an unconscious appreciation of the essence

of Art, prevented the possibility of there being any such. But taking the poem in the noble characters of its breathing form, is there any difficulty in knowing what it means? Even had those lines, in which the poet explicitly announces his design, been absent, the significance would have been perfectly clear. But those introductory lines, and the name of the poem, leave one and only one possibility open for mistake,—incapacity to comprehend or estimate the truth embodied. That truth is very ancient, if not in didactic expression, at least in historical manifestation: but as proclaimed by Tennyson, it may lay claim to a high originality. The right is always original; if we embrace in the term right, seasonableness of occasion, verity of doctrine, and perfect execution. The truth embodied in *The Palace of Art* has the infallible mark of originality, that it was specially called forth by the requirements of the time. In itself, besides, it is of so refined and exalted a nature, that it never can become commonplace. It is simply this, That Art can never be religion, that man can never live nobly all for himself, that the supremacy of intellectual culture, ministered to by all the beauty and intelligence of the world, is not so excellent as the lowly self-sacrifice of daily life. It is, that there are abysmal deeps of personality, in which slumber earthquakes, to convulse the soul despite of all the azure smiling of beauty; and that all the lamps which man can kindle here, to make a heaven for himself, will be but a vain mimicry of real felicity. When we consider that Tennyson's poems generally, and this poem in particular, teem with unmistakeable evidence that he has drunk, perhaps more deeply than any other poet, at the fountains of Art; when we reflect that the influence of Goethe upon the development of his genius has been profound and pervasive; and when we remember

that the most refined and plausible delusion of the age, presented in many forms, is radically this of putting culture for godliness, we are shut up to the conclusion that the writer is original and powerful, and that the truth he practically proclaims is substantial and important. I should hold it, too, in the highest degree dishonoring to Tennyson, to imagine, that he exhibited this truth merely as a poetical artist, that he chose it for its literary capabilities. In no case does our great poet protrude his religion; but his moral tone is as pure as Milton's; and *In Memoriam* contains numerous passages, indicative of a deep and meditative acquaintance with the highest questions of religion, and revealing the heaven-light of Christianity plainly irradiating the moralities of earth. In *The Palace of Art*, let it not be questioned, Tennyson's grand intent was, to exhibit the ghastly isolation of mere individual culture, the hollowness of self-worship (or that reflected self-worship which in "the Great and Wise" finds "Gods,") in contrast, not didactically unfolded but poetically suggested, with the household sanctities, the simple joys, the home-love, the heaven-love, the ancient, motherly smile, of Christianity. Of the imaginative power with which the great truth of the poem is exhibited, it is unnecessary, after what has been said, to make any remark. Suffice it to say, that, after having as it were kept this poem before my mind's eye for many years, I still gaze in fresh wonder on its marvellous poetical perfections, combining towards the enforcement of one great truth.

Only a great poet could have composed *The Palace of Art*. I do not, therefore, deem it absolutely necessary to cite any other instance, from the poems of Tennyson, of the combination of strictly intellectual with strictly poetic power. But I cannot forbear making a reference to *The*

*Two Voices.* This poem is perhaps unique. It is in the highest sense philosophic, nay, metaphysical, throughout: yet no lyrical trill of undiluted melody, no lilt sung by village maiden, was ever more purely and entirely poetical. The subject of the piece is that riddle of the painful earth, of which we hear in *The Palace of Art*. The argument on the one side is, that it were better to curse God and die; on the other, that it were better not to do so. The force and acuteness of the reasoning would be sufficient to fit out a powerful and original dissertation in metaphysics. But does the poet stumble on syllogism, or glide out of the form of poetic Art, into the analysis of metrical Science? By no means. The poem is a study of the richest poetry, from the consistency with which nature sustains the argument on either side. If sorrow is expressed, it is less in human accents than in the tears of nature; morning weeping in her still place, and the daisy fading away in death. If joy is described, it is written in the calm light of a Sabbath morn, and in the flowers hiding the grass. If doubt, disappointed hope, vain aspiration, are shadowed forth, they are emblemed by the mist of the hills, and the crags momentarily seen and then hidden behind its wreathing folds. If courage and resolution are the theme, we see the flashing of the battle in the distance, and mark the gleam on the face of the dying warrior as he watches the last victorious charge. Such knowledge of nature's language, so true, so deep, so varied, never belonged but to the born, the master poet. Readers who are novices in this language, who have not sympathetically studied in the mighty volume of nature, find the poem obscure. The express declarations of didactic composition, the exposed links of science, they miss. Such the poetic instinct sternly denies them. But when the poem is read poetically, it beams with light.

Truth, says the scientific skeptic, is unattainable. That is a simple fact, simply stated, and its accompaniment may be either irony or whatever else of a prosaic nature will suit. The poet-skeptic states the same fact, and likewise accompanies it with delicate irony. But you have a series of views, intelligible or unintelligible, instead of a statement :—

“Cry, faint not: either Truth is born  
Beyond the polar gleam forlorn,  
Or in the gateways of the morn.

Cry, faint not, climb: the summits slope  
Beyond the furthest flights of hope,  
Wrapt in dense clouds from base to cope.

Sometimes a little corner shines,  
As over rainy mist inclines  
A gleaming crag with belts of pines.

I will go forward, sayest thou,  
I shall not fail to find her now.  
Look up, the fold is on her brow.

If straight thy track, or if oblique,  
Thou know’st not. Shadows thou dost strike,  
Embracing cloud, Ixion-like.”

Truth, answers the scientific believer, may be difficult to define in the abstract; but I must credit the nobleness of the great believers and actors of human history. The poet-believer answers thus :—

“I cannot hide that some have striven,  
Achieving calm, to whom was given  
The joy that mixes man with heaven.”

Who, rowing hard against the stream,  
Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,  
And did not dream it was a dream,

But heard, by secret transport led,  
Even in the charnels of the dead,  
The murmur of the fountain-head —

Which did accomplish their desire,  
Bore and forbore, and did not tire,  
Like Stephen, an unquenched fire.

He heeded not reviling tones,  
Nor sold his heart to idle moans,  
Though cursed and scorned, and bruised with stones :

But looking upward, full of grace,  
He pray'd, and from a happy place,  
God's glory smote him on the face."

The conclusion of the poem is remarkable, both for the perfection of its poetical form and for the depth of its significance. The argument had not taken a wide range. The first voice had sunk into silence, merely from its inability to prove a universal negative. No recourse had been had, in opposing it, to the promised glories of Christianity. But now the light of dawn breaks ruddy along the whole horizon. It is the Sabbath morn, and men wend to the house of God, passing by the graves without a sigh. The hidden hope of the world, the millennial and celestial expectations of mankind, are emblemed in that house into which they enter. Great in thought and marvellous in poetry, this piece might alone sustain a reputation.

So much for separate poems. Tennyson is great likewise in isolated gleams of thought.

I said that the real and the ideal are not always separated

by any poet. I may add that the poetic and the scientific modes of thought and expression are not always kept distinct. Tennyson, however, remains singularly true to the character of a poet, seeming to have truth revealed to him in figure and impersonation while others reach it only by the chain of logical sequence. And there are verses of his which compress into their limits the essential characteristics of the national life of Europe for a hundred years.

“The people here, a beast of burden slow,  
Toil’d onward, prick’d with goads and stings,  
Here play’d a tiger, rolling to and fro  
The heads and crowns of kings;

Here rose an athlete, strong to break or bind  
All force in bonds that might endure,  
And here once more like some sick man declined  
And trusted any cure.”

Could Count de Montalembert convey, in any number of volumes, a more accurate account of “the state of society in France,” before and during the first Revolution, than is contained in that first verse?

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion, creeping nigher,  
Glares at one that nods and winks behind a slowly-dying fire.”

What a picture is this of Feudalism settling to its last sleep, with Freedom advancing upon it! Or of aristocracies, that nod and wink in the waning light of their heraldic honors, with the grand roar of the democracy beginning to be heard!

“All the past of Time reveals  
A bridal dawn of thunder-peals,  
Whenever Thought hath wedded Fact.”

This is a magnificent poetic embodiment of one of the most important and mysterious facts in philosophic history. But it would be absurd to attempt an exhibition of such passages as might, even with approximate completeness, illustrate Tennyson's power as a poetic thinker. The perplexities, the longings, the fitful gleams of hope, the tendency to lapse into ennui or despair, characteristic of the time, are all sympathetically reflected in his verse, shadowed or brightened by his supreme imagination. In *The Lotos Eaters*, there are glimpses into the mysteries of human destiny, penetrating perhaps as far as human eye can go. I confess I could have wished, although I consider the poem to possess a perfection defying any attempt at estimate, to have seen the atmosphere of Epicurean repose over the heads of the Lotos Eaters shaken by the thunder of some higher truth,—by the tumult of passionate, acting men, by the roar of battle; and I am assured that Tennyson could have effected this, without any serious damage to the preceding impression. But it has been hinted that the poet's sympathy with the joy of calm is somewhat more than healthy; and he has certainly succeeded in setting before us a trance of intellectual and sensuous peace, in comparison of which all other paintings of calm, whether with pen or brush, pass at once out of calculation.

I might enlarge indefinitely upon the order of subjects which Tennyson delights to handle, but a critique need not be an inventory, and I must hasten to a conclusion. One word, however, of those idyllic picturings, which form so remarkable a portion of his works. These have no parallels in the language, if in any language. The pastorals of the Pope and Dryden school are not to be named beside them. Wordsworth's "solemn-thoughted idyl," as Mrs. Barrett Browning, with a sincerity of compliment which from her

mind at least dismissed all idea of suppressed irony, bears the comparison better, yet not well. Tennyson's coloring is of a mellowness and glow, of which Wordsworth never gives a suggestion. Tennyson depicts passion with a pencil of fire, vivid, tender, true, as life: Wordsworth knew only the loves of the flowers, and even Wilson, in his elaborate apology, concedes that he wanted strength and vividness of diction. One finds himself utterly at a loss for expressions to convey the idea of sylvan loveliness, of tender, vernal gaiety, of gentleness in emotion and simplicity in thought, derived from such idylls as *The Gardener's Daughter* or *The Brook*. They make you think of sunbeams wandering among roses and lilies, of light streaming silently through delicate foliage, turning all its green to gold, of the prattling of children by sunny rills, of the tears and smiles of whispering lovers. They, too, are, of course, ideal; though in a very different way from the old pastoral. The miller's daughter must have had her gleaming beauty somewhat dimmed by the adhesion of that floating meal to her hair and dress, and there can be no reasonable doubt that, when Eustace and his friend visited the real gardener's daughter, they found her seated on the hack-log peeling potatoes. If the shepherdesses of the old pastoral were court ladies or Grecian Nymphs, the peasant girls of Tennyson are exquisitely refined English ladies. But this does not affect the inner truth of the portraiture,—since village girls and titled ladies love very much alike,—or do more than pleasantly enhance our sympathy with the emotions delineated.

As the poet of a period of unparalleled civilization, Tennyson occasionally reflects a mood, differing, in a peculiar and remarkable way, from any of the moods of passion. Not a few of his poems suggest a time of wearied

emotion and jaded sympathy, when passion, as it throbs in human breasts, is looked upon for its artistic effects, and contemplated in unparticipating, unimpassioned admiration. Civilization lies languid on her noonday couch, oppressed with the weight of her own crown, faint in the sun of her own prosperity. To a biographer of Tennyson, this characteristic of his poetry would be very suggestive, and it must have struck Mrs. Barrett Browning as distinctive when she described that poetry in the words "enchanted reverie." I could scarce define the cause, but *The Day Dream* is always associated in my mind with this general impression.

The greatest poem, all things considered, that Tennyson ever wrote, is *In Memoriam*. Its name indicates one of the most difficult efforts which can be made in literature. It aims at embalming a private sorrow for everlasting remembrance, at rendering a personal grief generally and immortally interesting. The set eye and marble brow of stoicism would cast back human sympathy; the broken accents and convulsive weeping of individual affliction would awaken no nobler emotion than mere pity: it was sorrow in a calm and stately attitude, robed in angel-like beauty, though retaining a look of earnest, endless sadness, that would draw generation after generation to the house of mourning. No poet, save one possessed not only of commanding genius but of peculiar qualifications for the task, could have attempted to delineate a sorrow like this. The genius of Tennyson found in the work its precise and most congenial employment; and the result is surely the finest elegaic poem in the world.

In whatever aspect we view it, by whatever test we try it, this poem is great, is wonderful. Very absurdly did those critics talk, who spoke of the grief it contained as not

very strong, perhaps not quite sincere, because it was so elaborately sung, and dwelt upon so long. They utterly misconceived the nature of that grief. They applied a general and commonplace rule to an altogether exceptional instance; an instance which might give new canons to criticism, but which might well perplex the old critics. The shadow of death had fallen between two spirits, knit together in close and noble friendship. That friendship had depended for its endurance on the community of lofty and immortal sympathies, of great thoughts, of pure and earnest affections. It was beyond the power of death to bring it to a termination. Death could only cast a vail of shadow between the two friends, and leave the one still on the earthward side to endeavor to pierce its obscurity, to hope for the day of its removal. It was rather a solemnity, a stillness, a composed and majestic mournfulness, that was cast over the life of Tennyson, than a darkening, overpowering distress. It was the silence and sadness of Autumn enveloping all the glories of summer; it was the melancholy of that aspect of nature, perhaps the loveliest of all, when the year first knows the approach of winter, and welcomes it with a resigned yet mournful smile. The shadow fell everywhere. Amid all the groups of living men, amid all the forms of external nature, there was still its presence, and into all the regions of thought and feeling it came. Everywhere it brought its solemn sadness: only, on the skies of the future, like the shadow of the earth cast up towards immensity, it seemed to kindle brighter lights as it were stars. The maiden combing her golden hair, in expectation of her lover, whose steps will not be heard that evening, or at all again, at the door, the bride leaving her father's house, the wife whose husband lives apart from her sympathy, in high and remote regions

of thought, the boy friends of the village green whose paths in after life lie far asunder,—these all move in the procession of the poem, passing through the shadow of its sorrow. Nature, too, must mourn with the poet, as Shelley saw her mourning by the bier of Adonais. The ocean must sink into calm around the coming corpse; the gorgeous gloom of evening must shroud it; and all the tears of morning must fall over it. Into the world of thought and meditation, the same solemn influence comes. The greatest questions on which the human mind can be engaged, questions relating to the being of God, to the immortality of the soul, to the limits of knowledge, to the nature and conditions of future existence, all of which arise naturally before a mind ever looking beyond the bourne for the face of a friend, present themselves to the mourner, if perchance he may find any solace or enlightenment in them. From the simplest scenes of domestic life Tennyson has ascended into the rare atmosphere of metaphysics, and from those heights of contemplation where he so well can tread, sees the shadow of his sorrow falling over the filmy clouds. Nor is this all. The shadow of that sorrow fell everywhere, but, as the poet himself tells us, it was a shadow glory-crowned. Death at times takes up the harp of life, as love did in one of Tennyson's earlier poems, and draws from it grand and inspiring music. The mighty hopes that make us men, the future glories of humanity, the social joys and tendernesses which even on earth shed a softening radiance over settled sorrow, the encouragement which a noble heart finds in dwelling on a life honorably finished, in listening to the earnest voices of the dead, all mingle in the lofty strain. So perfect is the unity, so mighty the sweep of this poem: what more could elegaic poetry be?

The measure adopted by Tennyson for *In Memoriam*

was almost new to the English language, and it has none of that sweetness or ring which at first take the ear. But, for its subject, it is perfectly adapted. The melancholy of the poet seeks no sudden changes or excitements; it is deep, solemn, still; and the sameness of the melody, its majestic uniformity, its calm *Æolian* flow, correspond exactly with the theme. Yet amid its stately uniformity, there is sufficient variation to prevent any disagreeable monotony. Now, in its calm, dream-like harmony, it seems, as it were, to give voice to the silent gaze with which we look into the eyes of Mary looking upon Christ; now it is deep, solemn, organ-toned, “*Æonian music*” measuring out the steps of Time—the shocks of Chance—the blows of Death; and yet again it takes up a trumpet note, and our hearts leap as it bids the wild bells ring out to the wild sky.

It will be fitting to add a few passages from *In Memoriam*, illustrative of the varying subjects which the poet treats, and the mode in which he adapts his delineation and his harmony to each. Let us glance, first, into one or two of those domestic scenes into which falls the light of sorrowing love.

“ Could we forget the widow'd hour  
And look on spirits breathed away,  
As on a maiden in the day  
When first she wears her orange flower !

When crown'd with blessing she doth rise  
To take her latest leave of home,  
And hopes and light regrets that come  
Make April of her tender eyes ;

And doubtful joys the father move,  
And tears are on the mother's face,  
As parting with a long embrace  
She enters other realms of love ;

Her office there to rear, to teach,  
Becoming as is meet and fit  
A link among the days, to knit  
The generations each with each;

And, doubtless, unto thee is given  
A life that bears immortal fruit  
In such great offices as suit  
The full-grown energies of heaven.

Ay me, the difference I discern !  
How often shall her old fireside  
Be cheered with tidings of the bride,  
How often she herself return,

And tell them all they would have told,  
And bring her babe, and make her boast,  
Till even those that miss'd her most,  
Shall count new things as dear as old ?

But thou and I have shaken hands,  
Till growing winters lay me low ;  
My paths are in the fields I know,  
And thine in undiscover'd lands."

Of a somewhat different kind, but from the same class of incident, is the following :—

" Dost thou look back on what hath been,  
As some divinely gifted man,  
Whose life in low estate began  
And on a simple village green ;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,  
And grasps the skirts of happy chance,  
And breasts the blows of circumstance,  
And grapples with his evil star ;

Who makes by force his merit known,  
And lives to clutch the golden keys,  
To mould a mighty state's decrees,  
And shape the whisper of the throne ;

And moving up from high to higher,  
Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope  
The pillar of a people's hope,  
The centre of a world's desire ;

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,  
When all his active powers are still,  
A distant dearness in the hill,  
A sacred sweetness in the stream,

The limit of his narrower fate.  
While yet beside its vocal springs  
He play'd at counsellors and kings,  
With one that was his earliest mate ;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea,  
And reaps the labor of his hands,  
Or, in the furrow musing stands ;  
' Does my old friend remember me ? '

Once more :—

" Two partners of a married life —  
I looked on these and thought of thee  
In vastness and in mystery,  
And of my spirit as of a wife.

These two — they dwelt with eye on eye,  
Their hearts of old have beat in tune,  
Their meetings made December June,  
Their every parting was to die.

Their love has never past away;  
 The days she never can forget  
 Are earnest that he loves her yet,  
 Whate'er the faithless people say.

Her life is lone, he sits apart,  
 He loves her yet, she will not weep  
 Though rapt in matters dark and deep  
 He seems to slight her simple heart.

He thrids the labyrinth of the mind,  
 He reads the secret of the star,  
 He seems so near and yet so far,  
 He looks so cold : she thinks him kind.

She keeps the gift of years before,  
 A wither'd violet is her bliss ;  
 She knows not what his greatness is ;  
 For that, for all, she loves him more.

For him she plays, to him she sings  
 Of early faith and plighted vows ;  
 She knows but matters of the house,  
 And he, he knows a thousand things.

Her faith is fixt and cannot move,  
 She darkly feels him great and wise,  
 She dwells on him with faithful eyes,  
 'I cannot understand : I love.'"

Sometimes the delineation is of feeling still deeper and more hallowed, as in this picture of Mary, when Lazarus has returned from the grave :—

" Her eyes are homes of silent prayer,  
 Nor other thought her mind admits  
 But, he was dead, and there he sits,  
 And He that brought him back is there.

Then one deep love doth supersede  
 All other, when her ardent gaze  
 Roves from the living brother's face,  
 And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,  
 Borne down by gladness so complete,  
 She bows, she bathes the Saviour's feet  
 With costly spikenard and with tears.

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful prayers,  
 Whose loves in higher love endure ;  
 What souls possess themselves so pure,  
 Or is there blessedness like theirs ? ”

Of the aspect of nature, with the great shadow falling over it, as represented by the poet, the following superb piece of imaginative description may enable us to form some conception.

“ Calm is the morn without a sound,  
 Calm as to suit a calmer grief,  
 And only through the faded leaf  
 The chestnut pattering to the ground :

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,  
 And on these dews that drench the furze,  
 And all the silvery gossamers  
 That twinkle into green and gold :

Calm and still light on yon great plain  
 That sweeps with all its autumn bowers,  
 And crowded farms and lessening towers,  
 To mingle with the bounding main :

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,  
 These leaves that reddens to the fall ;  
 And in my heart, if calm at all,  
 If any calm, a calm despair :

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,  
And waves that sway themselves in rest,  
And dead calm in that noble breast  
Which heaves but with the heaving deep."

Again :—

" Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,  
That rollest from the gorgeous gloom  
Of evening over brake and bloom  
And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of space, and rapt below  
Through all the dewy-tassell'd wood,  
And shadowing down the horned flood  
In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh  
The full new life that feeds thy breath  
Throughout my frame, till Doubt and Death,  
Ill brethren, let the fancy fly

From belt to belt of crimson seas  
On leagues of odor streaming far,  
To where in yonder orient star  
A hundred spirits whisper 'Peace.' "

From these we turn naturally to the more meditative and metaphysical parts of the poem. The hope that crowns the shadow with glory dawns here, though somewhat faintly :—

" Oh yet we trust that somehow good  
Will be the final goal of ill !  
To pangs of nature, sins of will,  
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood :

That nothing walks with aimless feet ;  
 That not one life shall be destroy'd  
 Or cast as rubbish to the void  
 When God hath made the pile complete ;

That not a worm is cloven in vain ;  
 That not a moth with vain desire  
 Is shrivel'd in a fruitless fire,  
 Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything ;  
 I can but trust that good shall fall  
 At last — far off — at last, to all,  
 And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream : but what am I ?  
 An infant crying in the night :  
 An infant crying for the light :  
 And with no language but a cry."

In the next, the spirit of man rises up indignant against the idea that nature's grandest piece of work will be crumbled into nothingness by death.

\* \* \* " And he, shall he,  
 Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,  
 Such splendid purpose in his eyes,  
 Who roll'd the psalm to wintry skies,  
 Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,

Who trusted God was love indeed  
 And love Creation's final law —  
 Though Nature, red in tooth and claw  
 With ravine, shriek'd against his creed —

Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,  
 Who battled for the True, the Just,  
 Be blown about the desert dust,  
 Or seal'd within the iron hills ?

No more ? A monster, then, a dream,  
 A discord. Dragons of the prime,  
 That tare each other in their slime,  
 Were mellow music matched with him.

O, life as futile, then, as frail !  
 O, for thy voice to soothe and bless !  
 What hope of answer or redress ?  
 Behind the veil, behind the veil."

In the following, the last I can quote, there is involved  
 a whole philosophy of human history.

"Contemplate all this work of Time,  
 The giant laboring in his youth ;  
 Nor dream of human love and truth,  
 As dying Nature's earth and lime ;

But trust that those we call the dead,  
 Are breathers of an ampler day  
 For ever nobler ends. They say,  
 The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,  
 And grew to seeming-random forms,  
 The seeming prey of cyclic storms,  
 Till at the last arose the man ;

Who threw and branch'd from clime to clime,  
 The herald of a higher race,  
 And of himself in higher place,  
 If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more ;  
 And, crown'd with attributes of woe  
 Like glories, move his course, and show  
 That life is not as idle ore,

But iron, dug from central gloom,  
And heated hot with burning fears,  
And dipt in baths of hissing tears,  
And batter'd with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly  
The reeling Faun, the sensual feast;  
Move upward, working out the beast,  
And let the ape and tiger die."

I have hitherto used solely the language of commendation. It is perhaps not too presumptuous to say, that I have exhibited some little capacity at least for the enjoyment of Tennyson's poetry. I consider what I have adduced to be matter of simple and conclusive demonstration; and I believe it to be sufficient to vindicate for Tennyson the highest place among the British poets of his day. He will henceforth, beyond question, be

"A star among the stars of mortal night:"

the brightest in that galaxy of poetic genius, containing Bailey, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and Alexander Smith, which illustrates the brave days of the Mother Queen,

"And like one constellation bright,  
Moves round Victoria."

But now I am brought to a stand still. I should certainly feel that my estimate of Tennyson's genius and achievement was little worth, if I could apply such terms as I have hitherto made use of to one of his recent poems. With precisely the same decision as I affirmed of *In Memoriam*, that in every aspect and by every test it is great and marvellous, do I affirm of *Maud* that it is a failure.

The grounds of defence adopted by the esoteric few

who are daring enough to profess admiration both for *Maud* and for Tennyson shift and vary. Is it demonstrated that the feeling of the poem—its love-story and passionate delineation—is, by every possible definition, commonplace? You are assured that *Maud* is a grand ethical composition, in which sublime truths, concentrated in the bolts of satire, are hurled at a degenerate nation. Is it proved that the thought, the truth, the doctrine, of the poem, are, in a similar sense and degree, hackneyed, and, though hackneyed, by no means profoundly or unquestionably true? You are informed that the description of passion is exquisite and exact. Is it shown that there is here no artistic perfection, that, in one word, *Maud* is not beautiful? You are met with knowing and oracular hints about truth to nature and dramatic force, and asked whether, beautiful or no, the characters and incidents of *Maud* are not exhibited in the actual world, and peculiarly at the present time. Thus do these select persons change their position, able to make a final and definite stand nowhere. If the mere fact that certain aspects of feeling are not incorrectly rendered, and the circumstance that here and there the melody is exquisite and the color glowing, are sufficient to make a poem worthy of comparison with those of the poet of *In Memoriam*, it may be conceded that *Maud* ranks with the other efforts of Tennyson. But whatever the position assigned it, the following points appear to me to be literally and irresistibly demonstrable: that its thought is commonplace and superficial; that its central idea, in respect of plot and passion, is in no possible sense original; and that no consideration of dramatic fitness is of the least avail to redeem its essential defect as a work of Art, its want of beauty.

What is the tale, what the argument of *Maud*? The

poem cannot be seriously charged with obscurity. It is so short that, after one or two perusals, its plan becomes perfectly clear, and the most deplorable of pedants finds himself unable to pretend that it contains mysterious truths patent to him alone. A certain person, lying under circumstances of misfortune, which he believes traceable to lust of gold, and, if you will, to the evil character of the times, indulges in long and fierce soliloquies on the social morality of Great Britain. He falls in love. His affection is reciprocated. The whole world beams and brightens around him. The grass has a fresher green, the flowers a sweeter fragrance; and he asks the stars whether the whole world has gone nearer to their light that they shine so softly brilliant. Suddenly his heavens are overcast. He kills the brother of the loved one, escapes to the continent, falls into a disordered state of mind, is haunted by the phantom of Maud, and at last, having returned to his native land, is comforted and tranquillized by the information, imparted by the ghost, that there is "a hope for the world in the coming wars," of which the Russian war is the commencement. That is all. The only originality about which I care to dispute is the right thing in the right place. The high argument by which the sanative influence of war in human history can be made out, by which carnage can be proved to be the daughter of God, would have been amply sufficient, if invested with poetic form in a manner worthy of the imagination before which arose *The Palace of Art*, to have vindicated for the poem a true originality. But do we not pause in astonishment when we learn that there are persons who are not sensible of an incongruity and absurdity, nay who profess to find a magnificent poetic fitness, in the proclamation of this great truth by means of the machinery of a private love affair, the hero of which is on

all hands allowed to be a weakling! The author of *Locksley Hall* and *The Palace of Art* demands our assent to a mighty truth, by letting us hear a jargoning, ill-conditioned misanthrope declare that a tailor, dishonest in peace, would be brave in war; and by introducing the ghost of a pretty girl, informing her distracted lover, that the Russian war will be a good beginning of the end! Scott has been blamed for warning Fitz-James by means of a mad girl, but his device is unobjectionable compared with this. Putting together the importance of the intelligence and the weight of the authority, one is reminded, by Mr. Tennyson's climax, only of the person, somewhat crazed, who convoked, it is said, the inhabitants of Edinburgh for the purpose of announcing some momentous fact, and declared, to the assembled Athenians, that he was about to assert his title to the throne of Great Britain, seeing that his mother's ghost had informed him, on the Broomielaw of Glasgow, that he was the Prince of Wales. It needs more than a ghost to tell us some things! To descend more to detail, the gloomy descriptions of the age blustered forth by our hero can be accurately paralleled from any one of Mr. Carlyle's books, written after the period at which that author abandoned reasoning and resolved to confine himself to denunciation. Selected passages from the *Latter Day Pamphlets*, very scantily softened by the form of verse, would fairly outdo, in downright jagged scolding, all the rant of this uncouth lover. There is nothing now more utterly commonplace than indiscriminate and unmeasured denunciation. Tennyson was surely not the man to follow in the wake of Mr. Kingsley in mimicking the worst parts of Carlyle. The love-story, again, apart from the ethical truth it so artistically embodies, is as commonplace as the denunciation. It is true that happy love spreads a blessed

illumination over the face of things, and unhappy love a blasting gloom. But there can be no originality in describing, for a second or a fiftieth time, what you have yourself described before, or what has been elsewhere described much better. The harp of life, struck by the hand of love, was heard in *Locksley Hall* discoursing new and most eloquent music; the moorland was there found to be dreary, and the shore barren, when the light of love was withdrawn. The influence of happy affection and the reverse was told once and forever in *Locksley Hall*. It is deeply to be deplored that Mr. Tennyson returned to a theme which the might of his own genius had exhausted. But not only will the author's own volumes deprive the delineations of feeling in *Maud* of originality. We must assert its claim to that characteristic, if we insist in so doing, in face of all the circulating libraries. In *Jane Eyre*, in *Shirley*, in *Villette*, in the loves of Jane and Rochester, of Shirley and Moore, of John and Polly, the not very recondite truth that the birds do n't sing sweetly when the heart is weary and filled with care, is proclaimed and illustrated. Here, in fact, lay the chief strength of one of the most powerful female intellects which ever existed; and it is no insult to Tennyson to say that, if in *Locksley Hall* he showed love in joy and in sorrow, with an epic power beyond any emulation of the novelist, he has, in *Maud*, fallen immeasurably behind Charlotte Bronte.

I have named *Locksley Hall* as exhibiting in some respects a resemblance to *Maud*. But the two poems do not, on the whole, admit of comparison. *Locksley Hall*, though, rhythmically considered, an exception to Tennyson's previous poems, is of its sort an absolute masterpiece. No lyre ever voiced the wild yet melodious raptures of passion more deeply or powerfully. But what

is the melody of *Maud*? It is neither the rapid, glancing lilt of Scott, the fervid rush of Byron, nor the rich in-woven harmony, of lute and harp and organ, to which our ear had been tuned by Tennyson. Its music is the music of kettle drums at a reeruits' ball. Sometimes, indeed, a wandering strain from the old music, seeming to rise magically from the far distance, takes us with the old delight:—

“ Alas for her that met me,  
That heard me softly call,  
Came glimmering through the laurels  
At the quiet evenfall,  
In the garden by the turrets  
Of the old manorial hall.”

In the love song of the garden, too, the lyric harmony and glowing joyousness are truly refreshing and delightful. But as for the poem in general, it will never be recognized as tuneful by any human ear, unless hopelessly stuffed with pedantic cotton. One cannot help imagining it sung by skeletons, to the accompaniment of rattling bones.

I am perfectly aware, dear pedantic critic,— who have had the misfortune to study yourself out of all human sympathy, and think nothing worth discovering unless it *is n't* there,— that you will affirm both the flitting feverish style of narrative, and the jerking, jingling melody, adapted to the general character of *Maud*, and on that account right. I answer that the person, into whose mouth the whole is put, must be supposed to utter it after his madness is over; and that an enveloping calm, which Tennyson knows so well how to combine with power of expression, would have had a far finer artistic effect than this atmosphere of wildness and raving. It is, besides, a fatal objection to any work of Art, even though it be descriptive of madness,

that there does not dwell in it some fascination, making you contemplate it with a certain pleasure. In the case of poetical Art, this pleasure is inseparably connected with tune, and were it only that the ear acknowledges no fascination in *Maud*, it would be proved artistically and poetically wrong. An all important distinction is here to be made, between the effect on our feelings, produced by the scenes or characters of the artist in themselves, and the charm~by which he constrains us to look upon them. We loathe Iago and detest Shylock, yet, while delineating them, Shakspeare entrals us with a mighty fascination. We shrink in horror from Haley or Legree, and almost shriek when old Tom is lashed to death: yet to the repulsiveness of Haley and Legree, and the death of the Negro, much of the popularity of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is to be imputed. The power, in fact, of the artist's genius is displayed mainly in the spell by which he fixes our gaze when he chooses. With Crabbe, we tire not in looking upon the jabbering maniac; with Tennyson, we calmly behold the ancient dragons tearing each other in their slime. Art paints you the sea shore, but it does not spatter you with the sand and surf. In *Maud* all this is forgotten. We are charmed by no sense of appropriateness, lured by no perception of means converging to an end, to sympathize with or suffer the unmelodious ranter. It is as if Mrs. Stowe had at once broken on us with the screams of Uncle Tom; as if Crabbe had merely jotted down the ravings of his maniac; as if Shakspeare had simply, accurately, and by themselves, echoed the chatteringings of Lear. I argue, of course, on the supposition that unmelodiousness is conceded in *Maud* and defended on the ground of appropriateness.

The mere play of the sympathies of the reader is not

secured in this poem. The heroine may pass. She can sing. But why does she love this remarkable hero? He is a sour, shabby, purposeless soliloquizer. By all physiological and physiognomical reasons, he is sallow, squalid, with his skin hanging loose on his bones, with matted hair, shuffling, conceited, probably squint-eyed, demonstrably a sloven. Why does she love him? He hates her kindred and all men and women. He is moody, idle, given to night walking. Worst of all, he writes such verse as

“I kissed her slender hand,  
She took the kiss sedately,  
Maud is not seventeen,  
But she is tall and stately.”

It is a scientific fact, deserving, for the honor of the fair, all due prominence, that no woman of the Anglo-Saxon race *could* love a man capable of such maundering. Why does Maud love him? He goes about with an aggrieved, injured-looking, gingerly expression, which makes you expect he is going to knock you down. Poe's raven is the only hero in literature his precise counterpart; but the raven had some dignity, and was not so intensely egotistical, so profoundly selfish, as this ungainly, gaunt, and ominous radical. And Maud, with aristocracy in every line of her face, loves him! Nay, she seems to be attracted by his personal appearance, perhaps by his bright and benignant look when he first makes up his mind that she has neither savor nor salt. She smiles him on without any meetings that we hear of, without any attractions on his part that we can conceive. What great Apollo will render us the reason of this?

*The Princess*, though inferior to the general run of

Tennyson's earlier poems, on the one hand, and to the single magnificent effort of *In Memoriam*, on the other, contains much exquisite poetry, and can hardly fail to maintain its place as a classic. It will stand higher than the *Story of Rimini*, though not, I think, in a different class.

It is my strong conviction that neither *Maud* nor *The Princess* was the result of very deep or natural feeling on the part of Tennyson. Let it not be imagined that I bring here any charge of mere affectation against the poet, or for a moment sanction the idea that he deliberately set himself to sing about what he cared nothing for. This superficial affectation is rare indeed with men of real genius. But it is competent to criticism, nay it is one of the most important tasks of a criticism aiming at philosophic accuracy, to penetrate the sources of feeling in the case of poetic production, to determine whether it dwelt really in the deepest nature of the poet, commanding all his powers, or whether it was, more or less decidedly, more or less unconsciously, assumed. It can hardly be alleged that the feeling in Byron's Tales is not, in a sense, strong and sincere: yet there are few who would now declare that the central affection of Byron's nature, a nature, as Moore declared, at bottom essentially practical and *English*, was awakened by those scowling Giaours and tragical Gulnares. The genius of Tennyson, I must be permitted to consider, is radically of a far rarer kind than Byron's; and being of a rarer kind, it admits less of any compulsion, however subtle, it acts with more pure unconsciousness. Byron was to a remarkable extent a made poet; he knew well whence he drew his stores and who were his masters; he could at any time write about equally well on any subject. He did a set of Hebrew Melodies, we might almost say, to order, and did them incomparably; he had acquired the Art of

Poetry as Landseer has acquired the Art of Painting. But Tennyson is not thus master of his capacities; their very rareness, costliness, dewy delicacy, prevent his being so. It is said that, before accepting the Laureateship, he stipulated that he should not have to compose birthday odes by tale; and the fact would merely indicate his own consciousness of the glorious impotence of genius. Now, in the case both of his earlier poems and of *In Memoriam*, the impulse to poetical production was natural, spontaneous, and mighty. In the former it was the first youthful enthusiasm for the Beautiful, the pure outgoing of uncontrollable radiance from the poet's soul, coloring all nature, and, wherever it fell, coming straight from the centre. In the latter, the impulse was one which affected the whole life; a deep, genuine, though noble and manly sorrow, constrained all the powers to minister to it. But in the case both of *The Princess* and *Maud*, I am assured that Tennyson felt himself expected to write, that he more or less *looked out* for a subject. In almost every other case, his subject was not sought for, but came of its own accord. The poem in which it bloomed out in fadeless beauty expanded spontaneously like a rose amid the dews and sunbeams. In *Maud* and *The Princess* it is Tennyson that works: in the others his mind is but the Æolian harp from which the cunning hand of nature draws ethereal music.

There are scattered over certain of the larger poems of Tennyson, and there are found separately among his earlier pieces, short lyrics of a highly remarkable character. They combine an elaboration that reminds one of the odes of Keats, with a rapidity and sweep not altogether unworthy of Campbell. Amid the beauty of Tennyson's general poetry, such lyrics shine out conspicuously beautiful, like

diamonds in gold fields. I cannot do better, in drawing towards a conclusion, than take up a few of these gems, and string them together, as it were, into a diamond necklace.

The first shall be taken from *The Miller's Daughter*. That poem is one of the finest emotional poems in the language; true in its originality, tenderly beautiful in its imagery, life itself in its feeling. The poetry of married life is there expressed perhaps for the first time, and so well that it might be the last. The very spirit and essence of connubial felicity breathe through the piece, and its supremacy, in the deep rest and peacefulness of its joy, to the fiery thrillings of passion, is triumphantly asserted.

“ True wife,  
Round my true heart thine arms entwine ;  
My other dearer life in life,  
Look through my very soul with thine !

\* \* \* \* \*

The kiss,  
The woven arms, seem but to be  
Weak symbols of the settled bliss,  
The comfort, I have found in thee.”

But I digress. It is not with *The Miller's Daughter* we have at present to do; it is with one of those trills of lyric melody, which so charmingly interrupt its general flow; a little love song, given by the bridegroom to the bride on their wedding day. The ideas are simple, and their suggestion probably as old as Anacreon, but the birds in the hedges, as the young pair passed along, could not have caroled more gaily or tenderly.

"It is the miller's daughter,  
And she is grown so dear, so dear,  
That I would be the jewel  
That trembles at her ear;  
For, hid in ringlets day and night,  
I'd touch her cheek so warm and white.

And I would be the girdle  
About her dainty, dainty waist,  
And her heart would beat against me  
In sorrow and in rest;  
And I should know if it beat right,  
I'd clasp it round so close and tight.

And I would be the necklace,  
And all day long to fall and rise  
Upon her balmy bosom,  
With her laughter or her sighs,  
And I would lie so light, so light,  
I scarce should be unclasp'd at night."

The next is a higher effort. It may, without any hesitation, be pronounced one of the most successful efforts ever made in lyric poetry. Except perhaps the appropriation of "the vision of the world and all the glory that shall be," as the song of the poet, there is in it no originality of idea. The feat of Orpheus was essentially that here recorded. But where, in the compass of sixteen lines, can we find such a description, of that sudden amazement and rapture, with which the voice of human song was from of old said to take the ear of nature? The delineation is as clear as it is condensed. Every touch is laid on as with a pencil of light; and Homer never was more graphic. In the melody there is a blending of buoyancy and stateliness beyond all praise.

## THE POET'S SONG.

“ The rain had fallen, the poet arose,  
 He pass'd by the town and out of the street;  
 A light wind blew from the gates of the sun,  
 And waves of shadow went over the wheat;  
 And he sat him down in a lonely place,  
 And chanted a melody loud and sweet,  
 That made the wild swan pause in her cloud,  
 And the lark drop down at his feet.

The swallow stopt as he hunted the bee,  
 The snake slipt under a spray,  
 The wild hawk stood with the down on his beak,  
 And stared, with his foot on the prey,  
 And the nightingale thought, ‘ I have sung many songs,  
 But never a one so gay,  
 For he sings of what the world will be  
 When the years have passed away.’ ”

The following is in a strain equally exalted: perhaps more so. The vision swept grandly before the poet's eye, and he shed out on it a light of immortality.

“ Of old sat Freedom on the heights,  
 The thunders breaking at her feet:  
 Above her shook the starry lights:  
 She heard the torrents meet.

There in her place she did rejoice,  
 Self-gather'd in her prophet-mind,  
 But fragments of her mighty voice  
 Came rolling on the wind.

Then stept she down through town and field  
 To mingle with the human race,  
 And part by part to men reveal'd  
 The fullness of her face —

Grave mother of majestic works,  
From her isle-altar gazing down,  
Who, God-like, grasps the triple forks,  
And, King-like, wears the crown;

Her open eyes desire the truth.

The wisdom of a thousand years  
Is in them. May perpetual youth  
Keep dry their light from tears;

That her fair form may stand and shine,  
Make bright our days and light our dreams,  
Turning to scorn with lips divine  
The falsehood of extremes!"

Our next is of a lowlier order and a milder tone, but in its way is exceedingly fine. Tennyson is a great master of pathos; knows the very tones that go to the heart; can arrest every one of those looks of upbraiding or appeal, by which human woe brings the tear into the human eye. In the few simple verses that follow, the pathos is purely realistic. Trusting to the mighty simplicity of nature, the poet has so completely divested the lines of all meretricious adornment, nay of all the coloring which even a chaste imagination can cast over fact, that they at first appear somewhat hard and bare. But only look long enough upon that simple fact: those tears, tenderest of all, that mingle joy with sorrow, can hardly fail to come.

"Home they brought her warrior dead:  
She nor swoon'd, nor utter'd cry;  
All her maidens, watching, said,  
'She must weep, or she will die.'

Then they praised him, soft and low,  
 Call'd him worthy to be loved,  
 Truest friend and noblest foe;  
 Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,  
 Lightly to the warrior stept,  
 Took the face-cloth from the face;  
 Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,  
 Set his child upon her knee;  
 Like summer tempest came her tears—  
 ‘Sweet my child, I live for thee.’”

There is far more than mere realism in the next. Imagination in her highest mood strikes the harp, and marshals the stately imagery. The pathos here too is deep, but it is the majesty not the prostration of grief.

“Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,  
 Tears from the depths of some divine despair  
 Rise in the heart and gather to the eyes,  
 In looking on the happy autumn-fields,  
 And thinking of the days that are no more.

Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,  
 That brings our friends up from the under world,  
 Sad as the last which reddens over one  
 That sinks with all we love below the verge  
 So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns  
 The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds  
 To dying ears, when unto dying eyes  
 The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;  
 So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

Dear as remember'd kisses after death,  
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd  
On lips that are for others; deep as love,  
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;  
O death in life, the days that are no more."

It has been said that the whole of *In Memoriam* is in the following; and the expression is not absurd.

"Break, break, break,  
On thy cold gray stones, oh Sea!  
And I would that my tongue could utter  
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,  
That he shouts with his sister at play!  
O well for the sailor lad,  
That he sings in his boat on the bay.

And the stately ships go on  
To the haven under the hill;  
But oh for the touch of a vanish'd hand,  
And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,  
At the foot of thy crags, oh Sea!  
But the tender grace of a day that is dead  
Will never come back to me."

The two pieces preceding the last are from *The Princess*. So is the next. The heroine of that poem is represented standing on the roof of her palace, a golden circlet round her hair and a babe in her arms, and uplifting, "like that great dame of Lapidoth," the martial strain. It is uttered in exultation over the defeat of her enemies by her selected champions.

Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n : the seed,  
The little seed they laugh'd at in the dark,  
Has risen and cleft the soil, and grown a bulk  
Of spanless girth, that lays on every side  
A thousand arms, and rushes to the sun.

Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n : they came ;  
The leaves were wet with women's tears : they heard  
A noise of songs they would not understand :  
They mark'd it with the red cross to the fall,  
And would have strewn it, and are fall'n themselves.

Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n : they came,  
The woodmen with their axes : lo the tree !  
But we will make it faggots for the hearth,  
And shape it plank and beam for roof and floor,  
And boats and bridges for the use of men.

Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n : they struck ;  
With their own blows they hurt themselves, nor knew  
There dwelt an iron nature in the grain :  
The glittering axe was broken in their arms,  
Their arms were shatter'd to the shoulder blade.

Our enemies have fall'n, but this shall grow  
A night of Summer from the heat, a breadth  
Of Autumn, dropping fruits of power ; and roll'd  
With music in the growing breeze of Time,  
The tops shall strike from star to star, the fangs  
Shall move the stony bases of the world."

I add only that singular, mysterious, yet strangely fascinating lyric, a play of wild fantastic melody, and flashing, foam-like color, which was composed, I believe, to the Killarney bugle music. The descriptive touches in the first verse are superb.

"The splendor falls on castle walls  
And snowy summits old in story ;  
The long light shakes across the lakes,  
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.  
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying :  
Blow, bugle ; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O hark ! O hear ! how thin and clear,  
And thinner, clearer, further going !  
O sweet and far from cliff and scar,  
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing !  
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying :  
Blow, bugle ; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,  
They faint on hill or field or river  
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,  
And grow forever and forever.  
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying.  
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying."

Historical parallels are not always or entirely to be relied on ; for time never accurately repeats itself, and external resemblances may divert attention from essential though deep-lying differences. The British world of to-day is altogether different from that of the commencement of last century. Yet I cannot but perceive, if not a parallel, at least a correspondence, between the poetry of Tennyson and that of the Pope and Dryden school. Since the Puritan era, there had been in Great Britain no period of excitement so deep and general, as that of the end of last century and the commencement of the present. In the former period, the minds of men were shaken in religious and civil revolutions ; in the latter, though religion had receded into the background, the convulsive strugglings of

democracy, and the magnificent war-drama with all Europe for a stage, had awakened every energy and every enthusiasm that slumbers in the human breast. These two periods seem to answer each other with their rolling thunders, silencing all intermediate noises. Each had a poetical literature. That of the Puritan age was concentrated in one man, John Milton. He was a literature in himself, an ample, a magnificent literature. The earnestness of that heroic time, of which throbings may yet be detected both in Britain and America, will burn, through the night of all ages, in his sublimest epic. The poetic literature of the modern period is represented in Great Britain by a multitude of names, Scott, Byron, Wordsworth, and the rest; men endowed with a poetic genius so true and so powerful, that they plainly tower above all who had preceded them since the Puritan era: but whose highest applause it must be, that their united voice wakes an echo worthy to reply to the single harp of Milton. After the Puritan poetry, came the poetry of Dryden and Pope. This was calmer, smoother, smaller. Neatness and elegance succeeded to rugged strength, appropriate thoughts neatly expressed, balanced sentences trimly versified, to great ideas chafing in the harness of diction, and burdened sentences rolling on in stern majestic rhythm. Dryden is a versifier but no poet, said Milton: the Puritan poet would probably have considered inconsistent with the poetic character that power of dexterous manipulation, that capacity of delicate chiselling, by which the poets of the new school set so much store. To the poetry of the modern revolutionary time, succeeded the poetry of Tennyson. It contrasted with that immediately preceding, in the perfection of its finish, and in its deeper, more delicate harmony. It was also, on the whole, more calm and reflective. So far it may correspond

to the poetry of Pope and his compeers. But the parallel cannot be carried further. The poetry of Tennyson is pervaded by an intense realism, by a deep unvarying truth, which sets it altogether apart from that of the school of Pope. Here all passion, from the panting ecstasy of first love to the satisfied, smiling happiness of connubial affection, is voiced with pure veracity. Here the deepest thoughts that can occupy the human mind are earnestly grappled with, and every shred of conventionality is flung aside. The very finish, the polish and delicacy, are not the result of deliberate manipulation, but the natural mode in which a poet, endowed with marvellous powers of expression, and accustomed to wander through all the Muses' walk, clothes his ideas and emotions. Such a poet cannot soon be popular with the million; but as the last and most exquisite culture of educated minds, as the ultimate sublimation of thought and beauty, as the most refined expression of the most refined civilization that ever dawned upon the world, his works must continue to exercise a mighty influence upon the leading intellects of those nations which lead the world.

### III.

#### MRS. BARRETT BROWNING.

THERE are two things, for which, I think, the world has especially to rejoice, in contemplating the position and circumstances of Shakspeare. The first is, that he was not technically a scholar, that between him and the great ancient hearts whose secrets he wás to read, there intervened, not the frosty twilight of antiquarian lore, but only the unpretentious dimness of translation and tradition. How well that, in great Julius, the greater Shakspeare had to recognize the heart only of a brother! How well that the thaumaturgic hand had not to clip, and measure, and adjust, amid moth-eaten cerements and rusty helmets, in order to fashion forth the old Roman exterior and shell of Julius, but only to cast asunder the gates of the human heart that those deathless notes might be heard, which are the undertone of human emotion in all ages, and to show us Julius himself! How well that he, who was to give to the Anglo-Saxon tongue that tune it was never to lose, whose language, exhaustless in range, in delicacy, in force, in variety, taking every hue of thought and feeling as the sky takes shade or sunshine, as the forest takes breeze or calm, was to remain forever the emblem of the multitudinous life and lightly moved and all-conceiving spirit of the modern time, as contrasted with the grave uniformity

and petrified aristocratism of antiquity, was tempted, by no familiarity with ancient writings, to any formal rotundity of diction or obscure involution of sentence! How dreadful the thought that he, whose hall of audience, increasing with civilization, is the world, he who has moved a broader stratum of human sympathy than any other man, might have passed into that narrow chamber, narrowing with every generation, in which Gray, Collins, and such erudite minstrels receive frost-bitten compliments from critics and pedants. But it is wronging Shakspeare to suppose, even for a moment, that the temptation of learning could have overcome him. He, of all men, would have been least apt to prefer the poor glitter of learned paint to God's sunlight of living smiles, the classic drops of Naiad's well or Castalian fountain to the sacred dew of human tears. He, of all men, would have been least apt to set the icy guerdon of a pedant's approbation above the sight of simple emotion, welling irresistibly from the heart of a peasant. Only, when one thinks how much learning has done to veil genius which it is not absurd to name along with Shakspeare's, and reflects that the throne of Milton, though of the loftiest, was never raised, on its classic pedestal, to the height of Shakspeare's, it is impossible to suppress a sense of satisfaction that the greatest author of mankind was not learned.

The next thing for which, perhaps still more expressly, we may be thankful in the case of Shakspeare, is the complex fact, that he never attained to consciousness of his powers, that he heard not the voice of his fame, and that he was never surrounded by a circle of admirers. Healthy, whole-hearted, it perhaps never occurred to him to ask what precise position he, Shakspeare, might occupy, in relation to other writers. His chief life-work, he may

have, on the whole, concluded, was the realization of a comfortable living in his native Stratford: one can imagine him staggering in bewildered incredulity, if the eyes of all coming generations, hailing *him* as the mightiest of mere men, had gleamed suddenly in vision before him. Gruff Ben Jonson, too, wishing he had "blotted a hundred" words of his dramas instead of boasting that he never made an erasure, and the other brave spirits of the Mermaid Tavern "whistling him down," when, though, indeed, clever, he was becoming something of a rattle, were not likely to permit Shakspeare to dote over his faults, to coax him into a belief that what the general common sense disliked in his poetry was its peculiar excellence, to make him imagine that any veil filming his genius was greater than his genius itself. Hero-worship is twice cursed; in the hero who is befooled, and in the zanies who befool him. The one is bewildered into extravagance, like, shall we say, Mahomet, or enervated by conceit, like, shall we say, Wordsworth: the other brings himself to rejoice in any feast of shells, if only it is laid out by his hero. The grand evil which hero-worship brings upon the literary hero is confirmation in his mannerism, instead of being left, like Shakspeare, and with nature always assisting him, more and more to cast off his mannerism in the broad light of truth. Living so near Wordsworth as this generation does, and recalling many phenomena allied to that presented by him, his hero-worshippers, and their mutual relation, one is tempted to say that the peculiar danger to which literature is in these days exposed is that of having mannerisms extolled into models. At all events, must we not rejoice that the subtlest of all poisons was never mingled in Shakspeare's cup, that he was all unconscious of his praises, perhaps even of his powers, that, like a great cataract, he rolled heedless down "the dust of continents to be."

The reader may not yet be prepared to sympathize with me in the feelings with which I regard the poems of Mrs. Barrett Browning. I cannot claim instant assent, when, though allowing that between her and Shakspeare, as well as many other men, there can be instituted no comparison, I yet deliberately assign her the same place among women as Shakspeare occupies among men. To show ground for this opinion will be, more or less, the object of all the following remarks. But it must at present be allowed me to declare, that no circumstance to which reference could be made, in connection with the genius of Mrs. Barrett Browning, is to me more evident or distressing, than the fact that it is prevented, by certain vailing clouds of esoteric culture and repelling mannerism, from casting abroad, with full, sunlike charms, the rich magnificence of its power. If it were the homage of a second rate applause that were challenged for this poetess,—if it was to be mentioned in honor of *her*, that she could translate from Bion and Æschylus, and talk of gnomons, zodiaes, and apogees,—it would be absurd to regret that certain characteristics of her poetry withhold it from the many and confine it to the few. But it is the very highest distinction that can be claimed for her; it is that mysterious power, to be communicated by no culture, and related to learning as the living flower, rich in green leaf and tinted petal, is related to the wooden framework over which it climbs, which she possesses. The power of stirring the inmost fountains of laughter and tears, of bringing music from the rough metal of every day life, of kindling those lights in human eyes, which glance from scholar to rustic, from peasant to king, with the gleam of recognition, reconciliation, and relationship, is hers. To this, all learning is a very small matter. And believing that Mrs. Barrett Browning is gifted with

this, I cannot but deeply regret that it is impeded in its way to that over which such power exerts its noblest sway, the general heart. Why, you cannot but ask, should the words of this woman, burning in their tenderness, penetrating in their truth, so broadly and deeply human in their application, not reach the strongly pulsing heart of common humanity? Why should not the cottage mother thrill with the expression she has given to maternal ecstacy? Why should not the mourner at the village grave see a beam falling from heaven on the sod, at the recollection of her words? Why should not the peasant Christian, who rejoices to trace, with Bunyan, the path of the Pilgrim from the city of destruction to the celestial gate, glow with a still loftier emotion, as this great Christian singer casts for him rays of revealing light, far and deep into the night of history, over the most mysterious sublimities of human destiny? That all this does not happen, that Mrs. Browning's readers are what is called select, and that they are students rather than listeners, is a well known fact. The cause can be easily discovered,—a certain obscurity, an excessive demand on the reader;—and I cannot help thinking that this cause came to operate, partly through her learning, (occasioning un-English involution of style,) and partly, however unconscious she may have been of the influence, through some hero-worshipping bray, proclaiming in her ears that her obscurities were her beauties. We are all, geniuses and common persons, subject to weakness. As one hears Mrs. Browning talking of apogees, and addressing Lucifer as Heosphoros, and marks the involved and sonorous Latinity of her style, he can hardly repel the suggestion, that the weapon which, probably with considerable toil, she acquired, with the aid of her fellow-men, for herself, was by her deemed of greater value, than those

weapons which it cost her no trouble to attain or wield, and which not man but God had given her. Her womanly humility even, her virgin modesty, may have hidden from her the fact that *she* could afford to thrust all learning into the background! As to the other influence, the applause of defects by cultivated pedants, I am far from asserting that Mrs. Barrett Browning ever indulged in any weak, Wordsworthian self-canonicalization; but in *Casa Guidi Windows*, one of her latest poems, I find the same sources of obscurity as in her earliest, and such as seemed at one stage to be clearing themselves away; and I cannot but think that the literary dilettantism of the age, with its execrable inversion of criticism, with its commendation of what the common heart does *not* feel, and of what the unsophisticated mind will *not* comprehend, has, to some extent, cast its enchantment over her.

It were a mistake to infer, from anything I have said, an ignorance, on my part, of the fact, that there is a legitimate obscurity attaching to certain kinds of composition, and attendant upon certain moods of genius. The strong surge of passion, bearing a writer along, may render him incapable of attending to the small niceties of composition, and putting in those little links, on which clearness depends. Shakspeare, his heart and brain throbbing with the passion and the thought of a *Hamlet*, cannot point and round his sentences with such nice discrimination, or even keep his ideas in such lucid sequence, as is easy for a Pope. A Tacitus will not write so clearly as a Macaulay. The theme, too, may be so remote from the beaten tracks of thought, the ideas may so far underlie the general growth and efflorescence of practical thinking, that effort, beyond what all readers will give, is necessary to their intelligence. To these considerations I would give full weight in proceed-

ing to survey one or two of Mrs. Browning's most remarkable poems; but this can be done in perfect consistency with what has been said.

The *Drama of Exile* is of itself sufficient at once to justify and to illustrate all I have advanced. Many, I doubt not, have cast aside the poem in despair, ere proceeding far in its perusal; and many more, after penetrating to the end, have said, with a feeling of honest regret, that they had been aware of the presence of astonishing genius, that they had met with many fine thoughts, but that the whole seemed to them a wild and wavering phantasmagoria. Yet this may fearlessly be pronounced one of the greatest poems in the language: of a pathos genuine and unfathomable, of sublimity exalted, and in which a resistless imagination casts its lit eye, with a glance swifter than that of logic, far aloft into the regions of intellectual and religious truth. So confident am I of this, and so confident also am I that the *Drama of Exile* is withdrawn from the knowledge and admiration of thousands whom it might instruct and delight, that I feel it an august task to attempt, as I purpose, indeed, to do in relation to Mrs. Browning's poetry in general, to wave aside the cloud-drapery, and loosen forth some of the notes of its mighty music.

The scene—for the form, though but the form, of the poem, is dramatic—is laid on the outer side of the gate of Eden on the evening of the day of the expulsion, and Adam and Eve are seen flying in the distance along the glare of the flaming sword. The first speaker is Lucifer. He opens the poem with a chant of exultation over God and man, and of haughty congratulation to himself and his angels. This chant has, in its first stanza, one of those grotesque rhymes which Mrs. Browning too carelessly permits, and by which, with a fastidiousness perhaps somewhat

feeble and excessive, the English reader is apt to allow himself to be prejudiced against a whole performance. One might desiderate, too, somewhat more of the majesty of the Miltonic fiend, to temper the fierce and passionate boasting of Lucifer. But the passage is nevertheless true in conception and magnificent in execution. It is the commencement of the poem, in the essential respect of striking its key note, of providing for its catastrophe or triumph, of folding up the end in the beginning. Lucifer, man's victor, stands upon the earth which he has conquered, calls upon his host to arise through the shaken foundations of the world, and boasts, with an assurance which his very despair seems to crown, that this throne must remain his, since it is evil, and God himself cannot do other than curse it. It is necessary to quote this opening strain, and the reader will do well to permit no slight offences to the ear to turn him aside from pondering it carefully, line by line.

“Rejoice in the clefts of Gehenna.  
My exiled, my host !  
Earth has exiles as hopeless as when a  
Heaven’s empire was lost.  
Through the seams of her shaken foundations,  
Smoke up in great joy !  
With the smoke of your fierce exultations  
Deform and destroy !  
Smoke up with your lurid revenges,  
And darken the face  
Of the white heavens, and taunt them with changes  
From glory and grace.  
We, in falling, while destiny strangles,  
Pull down with us all.  
Let them look to the rest of their angels !  
Who’s safe from a fall ?

HE saves not. Where's Adam? Can pardon  
Requicken that sod?  
Unkinged is the King of the Garden,  
The image of God  
Other exiles are cast out of Eden,—  
More curse has been hurled!  
Come up, O my locusts, and feed in  
The green of the world!  
Come up! we have conquered by evil.  
Good reigns not alone.  
*I* prevail now! and, angel or devil,  
Inherit a throne!"

The pure intellectual might—the strict metaphysical truth—displayed in the *Drama of Exile*, is precisely on a level with its consummate poetry. Satanic motives and emotions may be beyond the reach of human searching, but when we penetrate as far as reason and imagination can carry us, we find nothing deeper than reliance on evil in itself, and a belief, never shaken from old eternity, that the bond between woe and sin cannot be severed by the hand even of the Almighty, that not even God can take from the devil his crown of thorns. Mrs. Browning's fifth stanza, in the piece I have quoted, is a superb expression of this reliance and this belief, and by broadly exhibiting these in the outset, she lays the stablest possible foundation, in metaphysic truth, for her whole poem.

To this chant of Lucifer's there succeeds a dialogue between Gabriel and the fiend. Its tone is at first half Miltonic, half Byronic. The first piece of unmistakable originality it contains is the following remarkable passage. It is by no means entirely unexceptionable, but deserves our best attention from that free strength of imagination, which introduces, in contrast to the tumult of the Miltonic

contests between fiend and angel, the truer and more awful idea of the calm potency of light, on the one hand, and blank despair written, by the very calmness of its beam, on the visages of the rebel angels, on the other. The style of delineation, besides, is highly characteristic of the poetess. The occasion of the lines is found in an allusion made by Gabriel to divine and angelic pity.

*"Lucifer.      \*      \*      As it is, I know  
Something of pity. When I reeled in Heaven,  
And my sword grew too heavy for my grasp,  
Stabbing through matter which it could not pierce  
So much as the first shell of,—toward the throne ;  
When I fell back, down,—staring up as I fell,—  
The lightnings holding open my scathed lids,  
And that thought of the infinite of God,  
Hurled after to precipitate descent ;  
When countless angel faces still and stern  
Pressed out upon me from the level heavens  
Adown the abysmal spaces, and I fell  
Trampled down by your stillness, and struck blind  
By the sight within your eyes,—'t was then I knew  
How ye could pity, my kind angelhood!"*

The dialogue between Lucifer and Gabriel ended, and Adam and Eve still seen flying along the sword-glare, a Chorus of the Spirits of Eden sends, from within the walls of Paradise, a chant of melancholy condolence and farewell after the exiles. The idea embodied in the varying music of this chant of the Spirits, is the sorrow, pervading the whole world of Eden,—its streams, its trees, its flowers,—on account of the departure of the human pair. To bring out such a thought, in prominent poetic manifestation, was an evident necessity in any treatment of the subject, and Mrs. Browning performs the task with opulence and deli-

cacy of fancy, with great powers of thought, and with exquisite tenderness of feeling. But the personification is not happy, and the pathos would have trickled with far more deep and dew-like power on the heart, had there been less about songs built up note over note until they "strike the arch of the Infinite" and silence shivering, and shadings off to resonances, and such like touches of gorgeous feebleness, to which Mrs. Browning declines, when learning and criticism turn her from the clear monitions of her own genius, and the simplicity of nature, to make her mock herself.

In the next scene, we emerge more into the kindly blue of pure, plain, human feeling. For the first time, we are made unmistakably aware that our guide is a woman; not from any weakness, not from any sameness or extravagance, but from the access of elements of pathos and beauty, which no man could have commanded, and belonging only to one, whose womanliness is as intense as her genius is consummate. A broad gleam of softest light, dewy, beautiful, original, like a stream of sunlight falling through a shower on a rugged hill side, is cast over the tragical realities of her theme, from the feminine knowledge and womanly sympathy of Mrs. Browning. Eve, in distress and despair, accuses herself of having brought the great woe upon Adam, and adjures him to bring down at once the curse of death on her, "for so," says she, "perchance, thy God might take thee into grace for scorning me; thy wrath against the sinner giving proof of inward abrogation of the sin."

Adam replies.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

"If God,

Who gave the right and joyance of the world  
Both unto thee and me,—gave thee to me,

The best gift last, the last sin was the worst,  
 Which sinned against more complement of gifts  
 And grace in giving. God! I render back  
 Strong benediction and perpetual praise  
 From mortal, feeble lips (as incense-smoke,  
 Out of a little censer, may fill heaven),  
 That Thou, in striking my benumbed hands  
 And forcing them to drop all other boons  
 Of beauty, and dominion, and delight,—  
 Hast left this well-beloved Eve — this life  
 Within life — this best gift — between their palms,  
 In gracious compensation!"

All can sympathize with *this!* And with this:—

*Eve.*                    Is it thy voice?  
 Or some saluting angel's — calling home  
 My feet into the garden?

*Adam.*                    O my God!  
 I, standing here between the glory and dark, —  
 The glory of thy wrath projected forth  
 From Eden's wall, the dark of our distress  
 Which settles a step off in that drear world, —  
 Lift up to Thee the hands from whence hath fallen  
 Only creation's sceptre, — thanking Thee  
 That rather Thou hast cast me out with *her*  
 Than left me lorn of *her* in Paradise,  
 With angel looks and angel songs around  
 To show the absence of her eyes and voice,  
 And make society full desertness  
 Without her use in comfort."

The scene, however, soon changes, and the action of the poem becomes of more dark and terrible interest. Lucifer again appears, and the dialogue is sustained between him

and the exiled pair. Passages of power and pathos abound in this part.

*"Adam.* Ay, mock me ! now I know more than I knew :  
Now I know thou art fallen below hope  
Of final re-ascent.

*Lucifer.* Because ?

*Adam.* Because  
A spirit who expected to see God  
Though at the last point of a million years,  
Could dare no mockery of a ruined man  
Such as this Adam.

*Lucifer.* \* \* \* \* \*

Is it not possible, by sin and grief  
(To give the things your names) that spirits should rise  
Instead of falling ?

*Adam.* Most impossible.  
The Highest being the Holy and the Glad,  
Whoever rises must approach delight  
And sanctity in the act."

The pathos in the first of these lines is very noble. The thought with which they conclude is an impressive illustration of what has been advanced, touching the intellectual substance of this poem. It is one of the great lights ordained by God perennially to burn in the heaven of truth, dividing moral day from moral night ; and its calm, celestial effulgence casts into pale and sickly pining that "worship of sorrow," which, in the hands of Goethe and Carlyle, is but the sublime of sentimentalism, in spite of the grain of living truth, summed up by St. Paul in one verse, which it does contain.

As Lucifer disappears, there is heard a low music, prov-

ing to be "The Song of the Morning Star to Lucifer." This is one of those portions of the poem which cannot fail to repel many readers. The song of the star may be as good as the theme rendered possible; but it has no hold on human sympathy, and attains, for beauty, only a cold, unsatisfactory gorgeousness. Perhaps no poet could make you feel for a star, and certainly no person will feel in this instance. The piece plays, as will be seen, an important part in the evolution of the poem, but must in itself be pronounced in no sense felicitous.

The next scene is one of the longest and most important in the poem. The exiles are now far out in the desert, and the night is thickening round them. The farewells of the Eden Spirits have died away. The shadow of the curse is on the face of the world. The change is thus announced.

"*Adam.* How doth the wide and melancholy earth  
Gather her hills around us, gray and ghast,  
And stare with blank significance of loss  
Right in our faces! Is the wind up?

*Eve.*

Nay.

"*Adam.* And yet the cedars and the junipers  
Rock slowly through the mist, without a sound;  
And shapes which have no certainty of shape  
Drift duskly in and out among the pines,  
And loom along the edges of the hills,  
And lie flat, curdling in the open ground—  
Shadows without a body, which contract  
And lengthen as we gaze on them."

The meaning of this becomes gradually apparent. We have now the reverse of that soft music, in which the Eden Spirits had bidden adieu to those who were among them the centre of all blessing. To the outer world the man

and woman bring a curse, and they are received with the grim welcome of universal execration. The mode in which the poetess has chosen to body forth this detestation of all creatures for those who have brought them sin, is singular rather than happy, and would have gained in effect by gaining in simplicity. The signs of the zodiac become instinct with life, and stand in horrid circle round Adam and Eve. From that circle "of the creatures' cruelty," they cannot escape, and within it the spirits of organic and inorganic nature arise to taunt and curse them.

That this conception is strong and original, it would be hard to deny. But it can be wholly defended neither from the charge of extravagance nor from that of obscurity. The passage abounds in masterly delineation, and the horror and anguish, gradually darkening down like the night upon the human pair, arising from the contempt and hatred of those creatures over which they had been appointed to reign, are very powerfully expressed. I can quote but one stanza. It may convey some idea of the spirit and intent of the whole, but none at all of the execution. The spirit of inorganic nature speaks.

"I feel your steps, O wandering sinners, strike  
A sense of death to me and undug graves !  
The heart of earth, once calm, is trembling like  
The ragged foam along the ocean-waves :  
The restless earthquakes rock against each other ;—  
The elements moan round me — 'Mother, mother' —  
And I wail !"

Lucifer suddenly rises in the circle, but only to increase the anguish of the exiles, now approaching its climax. Lucifer, fierce and remorseless, launches at them this bolt, the more piercing in its agony that it is winged with truth :—

"Your sin is but your grief in the rebound  
And cannot expiate for it."

Hardly a line now occurs but might be quoted. The following passage, however, cannot be passed by. It is important, not so much in its bearing on the catastrophe of the poem at the stage at which we have now arrived, as in its peculiar and felicitous exhibition of Mrs. Browning's mode of imaginative conception and handling. The lines in which Lucifer applies to himself the comparison of the lion are too long to quote.

*"Lucifer.* Dost thou remember, Adam, when the curse  
Took us in Eden? On a mountain-peak  
Half-sheathed in primal woods and glittering  
In spasms of awful sunshine, at that hour  
A lion couched,— part raised upon his paws,  
With his calm, massive face turned full on thine,  
And his mane listening. When the ended curse  
Left silence in the world,— right suddenly  
He sprang up rampant and stood straight and stiff,  
As if the new reality of death  
Were dashed against his eyes,— and roared so fierce  
(Such thick carnivorous passion in his throat  
Tearing a passage through the wrath and fear),  
And roared so wild, and smote from all the hills  
Such fast, keen echoes crumbling down the vales  
Precipitately,— that the forest beasts,  
One after one, did mutter a response  
Of savage and of sorrowful complaint  
Which trailed along the gorges. Then, at once,  
He fell back, and rolled crashing from the height  
Into the dusk of pines.

*Adam.* It might have been.  
I heard the curse alone."

No hand but Mrs. Browning's could have drawn that picture of the lion. The pathos of Adam's last words is sublime; and, so far as I know, original. In *Isobel's Child*, a later poem of Mrs. Browning's, there occur the following words, the person addressed being one of the redeemed, and the time the day of judgment:—

"Thrones and seraphim,  
Through the long ranks of their solemnities,  
Sunning thee with calm looks of Heaven's surprise —  
*Thy* look alone on *Him*."

This idea has often been expressed, but I do not remember an instance in which the *opposite* note, in the same grand harmony of pathos, is struck. Mrs. Browning has given both.

The attention of the reader is now drawn studiously to Lucifer, as if the poetess had some purpose with him. With strange dauntlessness, does this marvellous woman gaze down into the depths of Satanic misery.

"Lucifer. \* \* \* \*

I the snake, I the tempter, I the cursed,—  
To whom the highest and the lowest alike  
Say, Go from us— we have no need of thee,—  
Was made by God like others. Good and fair,  
He did create me!— ask Him, if not fair!  
Ask, if I caught not fair and silverly  
His blessing for chief angels on my head  
Until it grew there, a crown crystallized!  
Ask, if He never called me by my name,  
*Lucifer*— kindly said as 'Gabriel'—  
*Lucifer*— soft as 'Michael!' while serene  
I, standing in the glory of the lamps,  
Answered 'my Father,' innocent of shame  
And of the sense of thunder. \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

Pass along

Your wilderness vain mortals! Puny griefs,  
In transitory shapes, be henceforth dwarfed  
To your own conscience by the dread extremes  
Of what I am and have been. If ye have fallen,  
It is but a step's fall,— the whole ground beneath  
Strewn woolly soft with promise! if ye have sinned,  
Your prayers tread high as angels! if ye have grieved,  
Ye are too mortal to be pitiable,  
The power to die disproves the right to grieve.

\* \* \* \* \*

\* \* Increase and multiply,

Ye and your generations, in all plagues,  
Corruptions, melancholies, povertyes,  
And hideous forms of life and fears of death,—  
The thought of death being always eminent,  
Immovable and dreadful in your life,  
And deafly and dumbly insignificant  
Of any hope beyond,— as death itself,—  
Whichever of you lieth dead the first,—  
Shall seem to the survivor—yet rejoice!  
My curse catch at you strongly, body and soul,  
And IIE find no redemption — nor the wing  
Of seraph move your way — and yet rejoice!  
Rejoice,— because ye have not set in you  
This hate which shall pursue you — this forehate  
Which glares without, because it burns within —  
Which kills from ashes — this potential hate  
Wherein I, angel, in antagonism  
To God and His reflex beatitudes,  
Moan ever in the central universe  
With the great woe of striving against Love —  
And gasp for space amid the Infinite —  
And toss for rest amid the Desertness —

Self-orphaned by my will, and self-elect  
To kingship of resistant agony  
Toward the good round me — hating good and love  
And willing to hate good and to hate love,  
And willing to will on so evermore,  
Scorning the Past, and damning the To Come —  
Go and rejoice ! I curse you !”

Milton never sent a plummet so far down into the depths of Satanic anguish! And if we earnestly ponder, with what amount of scientific precision is possible in the case, wherein that anguish must consist, we shall, I think, arrive at the conclusion of the poetess. Precisely in this necessity of sorrow where there is persistence in ill,—precisely in the inevitable arrangement that the being personifying sin must personify also that pain which is the essence of all its influence subjective and objective,—precisely in being eternally blasted by the rays of Light and Love defied,—must lie the deepest reality of Satanic woe.

After a further elaboration of melancholy circumstance, rather retarding than advancing the action of the poem, the humiliation and despair of the wanderers reaches its climax. Adam and Eve, able to resist no longer, appeal to the Deliverer who has been promised. Then comes the change for which we have been so long prepared. A vision of Christ appears. The circle which had enclosed the human pair "pales before the heavenly light," and the spirits of creation, pouring, until now, their indignation on the head of the man and the woman, give signs of alarm and dismay.

The Saviour thus stills the tumult of the rage and hatred of the creatures.

"Christ. Spirits of the earth,  
I meet you with rebuke for the reproach

And cruel and unmitigated blame  
Ye cast upon your masters. \* \* \* \*  
This regent and sublime Humanity  
Though fallen, exceeds you ! this shall film your sun,  
Shall hunt your lightning to its lair of cloud,  
Turn back your rivers, footpath all your seas,  
Lay flat your forests, master with a look  
Your lion at his fasting, and fetch down  
Your eagle flying. \* \* \* \*  
\* \* \* \* \* \* \* ,

Then occurs another of those inimitable passages, in which Mrs. Browning is peculiarly herself; in which she vindicates for her sex the distinction that a woman and not man has written of it *most nobly*. In fitness of conception, in terseness of diction, in loftiness of thought, the following lines have all that the genius of a man could impart: while the thrill of deeper tenderness pervading them tells, in unmistakable accents, of a heart which can throb with wifely emotion, and a breast on which a babe, sleeping in the light of its mother's smile, may rest. In all great poems, there are many lesser poems, complete in themselves; and this passage may be regarded as a poem, on the duties and joys of woman, by Mrs. Browning. It occurs in the form of a blessing, pronounced by Adam, at the command of Christ, on Eve. I regret that it is too long to be quoted entire.

"Adam. \* \* Henceforward, rise, aspire  
To all the calms and magnanimities,  
The lofty uses and the noble ends,  
The sanctified devotion and full work,  
To which thou art elect for evermore,  
First woman, wife, and mother.

Eve. And first in sin.

*Adam.* And also the sole bearer of the Seed  
Whereby sin dieth! Raise the majesties  
Of thy disconsolate brows, O well-beloved,  
And front with level eyelids the To Come,  
And all the dark o' the world. Rise, woman, rise  
To thy peculiar and best altitudes  
Of doing good and of enduring ill,—  
Of comforting for ill, and teaching good,  
And reconciling all that ill and good  
Unto the patience of a constant hope,—  
Rise with thy daughters! If sin came by thee,  
And by sin, death,—the ransom-righteousness,  
The heavenly light and compensative rest  
Shall come by means of thee. If woe by thee  
Had issue to the world, thou shalt go forth  
An angel of the woe thou didst achieve,  
Found acceptable to the world instead  
Of others of that name, of whose bright steps  
Thy deed stripped bare the hills. Be satisfied;  
Something thou hast to bear through womanhood,  
Peculiar suffering answering to the sin,—  
Some pang paid down for each new human life,  
Some weariness in guarding such a life,  
Some coldness from the guardled; some mistrust  
From those thou hast too well served: from those beloved  
Too loyally, some treason; feebleness  
Within thy heart, and cruelty without,  
And pressures of an alien tyranny  
With its dynastic reasons of larger bones  
And stronger sinews. But, go to! Thy love  
Shall chant itself its own beatitudes,  
After its own life-working. A child's kiss  
Set on thy sighing lips shall make thee glad;  
A poor man served by thee, shall make thee rich;  
A sick man helped by thee, shall make thee strong  
Thou shalt be served thyself by every sense  
Of service which thou renderest. \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

*Eve.* \* \* \* \* I accept

For me and for my daughters this high part  
Which lowly shall be counted. Noble work  
Shall hold me in the place of garden rest,  
And in the place of Eden's lost delight  
Worthy endurance of permitted pain ;  
While on my longest patience there shall wait  
Death's speechless angel, smiling in the east  
Whence cometh the cold wind."

Every sentence here is full of meaning and pathos, meaning which every mind can apprehend, pathos which every heart can feel.

High, however, as has been the flight of the poetess hitherto, she may be said to have yet unfolded but the minor sublimities of her song. Christ, who has until now stood before the exiles in the majesty of his Divine nature, takes the aspect of humanity and suffering, and proceeds to predict for them his own great anguish and the accomplishment of their supreme hope. To execute so daring an attempt on the part of the poetess,—to put words into the mouth of the Saviour foretelling his own humiliation, with perfect preservation of Christian reverence, yet with an energy befitting the theme, and poetic beauty embracing the whole,—was a task of overpowering difficulty. Mrs. Browning has performed it in a way not unworthy of Milton. The Saviour announces first his own crucifixion, and his being forsaken of the Father. This is done in a passion of perhaps overstrained sublimity. To personify eternity would have tasked the genius of Milton and Shakspeare combined, and it is high praise to Mrs. Browning to say that, thus personifying, she has not absolutely failed: but first to personify eternity, and then to represent its silent

astonishment at the death of Christ, was surely, in conception at least, as magnificent as daring.

“Eternity stands alway fronting God ;  
 A stern colossal image, with blind eyes  
 And grand dim lips that murmur evermore  
 God, God, God !                  \*                  \*                  \*  
 \*                  \*                  \*                  \*                  \*                  \*  
 Eternity shall wax as dumb as Death,  
 While a new voice beneath the spheres shall cry,  
 ‘God ! why hast Thou forsaken me, my God ?’  
 And not a voice in Heaven shall answer it.”

From his own sufferings, Christ passes to the blessings of which they are the source to mankind. Only a part of this superb passage can be quoted.

“In my brow  
 Of kingly whiteness, shall be crowned anew  
 Your discrowned human nature. Look on me !  
 As I shall be uplifted on a cross  
 In darkness of eclipse and anguish dread.  
 So shall I lift up in my pierced hands,  
 Not into dark, but light — not unto death,  
 But life, — beyond the reach of guilt and grief,  
 The whole creation. Henceforth in my name  
 Take courage, O thou woman, — man, take hope !  
 Your grave shall be as smooth as Eden’s sward,  
 Beneath the steps of your prospective thoughts,  
 And, one step past it, a new Eden gate  
 Shall open on a hinge of harmony  
 And let you through to mercy. Ye shall fall  
 No more, within that Eden, nor pass out  
 Any more from it. In which hope, move on,  
 First sinners and first mourners. Live and love, —  
 Doing both nobly, because lowlily !

Live and work, strongly,— because patiently!  
 And, for the deed of death, trust it to God  
 That it be well done, unrepented of,  
 And not to loss. And thence, with constant prayers  
 Fasten your souls so high, that constantly  
 The smile of your heroic cheer may float  
 Above all floods of earthly agonies,  
 Purification being the joy of pain!"

Christ departs. The spirits of the earth sing in submission and commiseration. Choruses of angels chant the glories of redemption and the triumphs of the Redeemer.

"When your bodies therefore  
 Reach the grave their goal,  
 Softly will we care for  
 Each enfranchised soul!

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

\*       \*       \*       \*

From the empyrean centre  
 Heavenly voices shall repeat,  
 'Souls redeemed and pardoned, enter,  
 For the chrism on you is sweet.'  
 And every angel in the place  
 Lowlily shall bow his face,  
 Folded fair on softened sounds,  
 Because upon your hands and feet  
 He images his Master's wounds!"

"The last enemy," it is written, "that shall be overcome is death." This final conquest shall close the roll of the Saviour's victories. But what hand so bold as attempt the delineation of that crowning triumph? Mrs. Browning, gazing, with her woman's eye, where Michael Angelo's might have blenched, has dared to depict Christ taming the steed of Death. The piece is the last of those poems

within this poem, which, never transgressing the grand law of rhythmic and imaginative harmony, in obedience to which they all move, have yet a beauty, as of separate stars in a constellation, pertaining to themselves alone. The extracts I have already made occupy so much space that I cannot quote this remarkable passage: but let any one dispassionately, and making allowance for certain extravagances and obscurities, consider its conception and execution,—the descent of Christ into Hades to guide the Death-steed calmly, from amid the moaning and trembling ranks of the lost,—the last journey of the pale horse up through immensity, while the planets become ashen gray and motionless as stones—up towards the crystal ceiling of heaven, through ranks of angels paling at the sight—up straight to the Throne—where the eye of Jehovah, looking out in the light of life essential, strikes upon the phantasm, and, “meek as a lamb at pasture,” it staggers, shivers, expires,—and then decide whether there is here a mighty and marvellous imagination, or whether there is not.

But the poem is not yet ended. The full circle of its great unity is not completed. It opened with that exultant song of Lucifer's, in which he boasted over man, and in which the lurid joy of a revenge that could not be balked tinged the darkness of his despair. The jewel in the Creator's crown, which he had blackened and blasted by sin, could not surely be taken from him: the light of God, meeting sin, *must* turn into lightning to afflict and destroy. But now, amid the rejoicing angel voices, is heard a strange cry.

“*First voice.* Gabriel, O Gabriel!

*Second voice.* What wouldest thou with me?

*First voice.* Is it true, O thou Gabriel, that the crown  
Of sorrow, which I claimed, another claims?  
That HE claims THAT too?

*Second voice.* Lost one, it is true.

*First voice.* That HE will be an exile from His Heaven,  
To lead those exiles homeward?

*Second voice.* It is true.

*First voice.* That HE will be an exile by His will,  
As I by mine election?

*Second voice.* It is true.

*First voice.* That I shall stand sole exile finally,—  
Made desolate for fruition?

*Second voice.* It is true.

*First voice.* Gabriel.

*Second voice.* I hearken.

*First voice.* Is it true besides—  
A right true—that mine orient Star will give  
Her name of ‘Bright and Morning Star’ to Him,—  
And take the fairness of his virtue back,  
To cover loss and sadness?

*Second voice.* It is true.

*First voice.* Untrue, untrue! O Morning Star! O MINE.  
Who sittest secret in a veil of light  
Far up the starry spaces, say—*Untrue!*  
Speak but so loud as doth a wasted moon  
To Tyrrhene waters! I am Lucifer—

[A pause. Silence in the stars.]  
All things grow sadder to me, one by one.”

The culminating pathos of *Paradise Regained*, *had it been completed*, could have been none other than that here expressed. I know not where, out of sacred writ, a pathos more sublime is attained.

I have judged it best to devote particular attention to one of Mrs. Browning's poems, that the reader may have an opportunity of comparing my statements and opinions, with at least a few of the passages on which they are based. If he is acquainted with anything in the range of female poetry, worthy of being set for a moment on a level with what we have seen, I must confess my own ignorance: there seems to me to be enough in this poem alone, to set the poetess at the head of her sex. The imagination it displays is not only fertile in metaphoric brilliancies and lyric bursts, but broad of vision, and mighty to control a thousand elements into one harmony. The intellectual power of the poem is exhibited, not only in the rugged vigor of the style, but in the penetration with which the metaphysic depths of the subject are searched, and in the easy mastery with which great truths, of the sort on which minds of sound sagacity, yet daring speculation, pillar themselves, are set in their due place to support the whole. Two things further appear to be peculiarly characteristic of this poem: beautiful apart, they are still more beautiful in combination. The first is its earnest and essential Christianity: the second its intense and pathetic womanliness. Mrs. Browning is in the highest sense, and always, a Christian poetess. She has drunk more deeply into the spirituality of the gospel, and, it may even be, looked with greater earnestness and amazement upon certain of its most sublime facts, than Milton. The poem before us is, throughout, Christian; not ethically, not sentimentally, not alone in spirit, far less for artistic purposes, but in the strictness and literalness of actual belief. It is true that, in legitimate consistency with her poetic object,—to contrast a mankind that found salvation with an angel host which did not,—she has used the general expressions

applied by Scripture in that sense, and which, alone, would imply universalism. But it is not necessary to suppose her declaring her belief that those who, in the most free exercise of their human will, defy the Saviour, and take part with the diabolic tormentors of man in time, will share the *same* futurity with those who *now* commence an eternity of opposition to evil under the banner of the Redeemer. Such a belief introduces elements of fatal weakness into a system of thought, and is inconsistent with any theory of things, in which strength of realism repels fancy and sentimentalism. But interpreting the expressions to which I allude in the sense I have indicated, we find, in the *Drama of Exile*, all those central truths of Christianity which have been accepted by the mightiest minds of the era, Paul, Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Edwards, Neander; and once more it has been demonstrated that the bare facts of Christianity transcend in sublimity any counterfeit, and more powerfully stimulate a really great imagination than any other theme whatever. The Christianity of Mrs. Browning's poems is far too constant and deep-lying—it enters too pervasively into the warp and woof of her thought and feeling—to be by possibility an affectation or fashion. It is manifestly the life of her life, the breath of immortality at the centre of her being. In the dedication of her first volumes to her father, she appeals, with solemn tenderness, to his knowledge that she holds "over all sense of loss and transiency, one hope by one Name." Her poetry testifies that in so saying she speaks words of truth and soberness. Her genuine womanliness is, in this poem, no less conspicuous. It is characteristic of this century, that in all senses women play a more important part in literature than heretofore. Not only have women of genius commanded universal homage, but the distinctive characteristics of

the female nature, have been exhibited with more exquisite analysis and more powerful truth than heretofore. The heart of woman was, I suppose, never laid bare as it has been by Charlotte Bronte and Mrs. Browning. And in the *Drama of Exile*, in such passages as we have seen, the mission of woman to the world—her peculiar glory of sowing blessing with every tear she sheds—her angelic privilege of being the incarnation of peace above conflict, of gentleness mightier than anger, of love stronger than hate—is defined and illustrated, with that bold sweep which pertains to truth, and in those colors which only sympathy can supply. But we must embrace in our view other poems besides the *Drama of Exile* before we apprehend, to the full, the revelation of the female heart, opened to us by this poetess.

And now, since readers may be willing to concede that in this poem there is a sufficiency of simple human emotion, expressed in the mother tongue of noble passion, to thrill all hearts with pleasure, I must once more appeal to them, whether it is not cause of regret, that the elaborate machinery and painful erudition of the poem will indubitably prevent the general mind from penetrating to its inner beauty. The sense reels under the bewildering pageantry of earth spirits, and bird spirits, and river spirits, and zodiacs, and stars, and chorusing angels: the mind is perplexed with gnomons, and apogees, and vibrations, and infinites. One stares on all this as he might on the foam, glorious in its shivered snow and wavering irises, that roars and raves round a coral reef. The vessel draws near the reef, and many an eye looks into that foam, but its beauty fascinates only for a moment, and the sail fills, and the island is left forever. Never, perhaps, is it known, that in the heart of that island, hidden by the torn fringes

of tinted foam, there was soft green grass, and a quiet, crystal fountain, and cottages smiling in the light of flowers, and all the home affections offering a welcome.

Of Mrs. Browning's other poems, I shall say, comparatively, but a few words.

*The Seraphim* is a poem which all ought to study, who would habituate their minds to soaring thought and lofty imagination. It is in conception that it is finest. The poetess depicts the emotions with which the highest of the heavenly host contemplated the crucifixion. How magnificent the daring of this! Nay, rather, let us say how irresistible must have been the afflatus, breathing on the poetess, as she contemplated this, to her, central fact of human story, and bearing her towards the highest heavens, to find hearts strong enough representatively to feel, and tongues fit to express, the emotions she experienced. The speakers are two seraphim, Zerah and Ador. In the following passage, the only one I can quote from the poem, I know not whether the imaginative energy, or the almost startling realism, is the more remarkable; but their union makes up one of the most extraordinary passages in English poetry:—

“*Ador.*   The pathos hath the day undone :  
The death-look of His eyes  
Hath overcome the sun,

And made it sicken in its narrow skies —  
Is it to death ?

“*Zerah.*   *He dieth.*   Through the dark,  
He still, He only, is discernible —  
The naked hands and feet, transfixed stark,  
The countenance of patient anguish white  
Do make themselves a light  
More dreadful than the glooms which round them dwell,  
And therein do they shine.”

*A Vision of Poets* can hardly fail to suggest Tennyson. A first and partial acquaintance, indeed, with the works of Mrs. Browning, is apt to prompt the opinion that she may be classed among the pupils and followers of that poet. Both belong to one time, and their thoughts run, not unfrequently, in the same channels. But a more complete knowledge of Mrs. Browning's works puts to flight every imagination of an influence which could do more than stimulate, which could in the slightest degree control, her powers. Her genius is of an order altogether above that which can be permanently or organically affected by any other mind. And, in truth, her whole mode of imaginative action is different from that of Tennyson. The unrivalled finish and strange perfection of the latter,—his unique imaginative faculty, which combines a color more rich than that of Eastern gardens, with a science more austere than that of Greek architecture,—his instinctive and imperious rejection of aught wearing even the semblance of fault or imperfection, requiring that all his marble be polished, and all his gems crystals,—can in no respect or degree be said to characterize Mrs. Browning. Tennyson, more than any English poet of mark, approaches the statue-like calmness of Goethe: Mrs. Browning thrills with every emotion she depicts, whether passion kindles with a smile her own funeral pyre, or earnestness flows rhythmic from the lips of the Pythoness, or irrepressible weeping shakes the breast of the child. Tennyson is the wizard, looking, with unmoved face, into the furnace, whose white heat melts the flint: Mrs. Browning has the furnace in her own bosom, and you see its throbings. Tennyson's imagination treads loftily on cloth of gold, its dainty foot neither wetted with dew nor stained with mire: Mrs. Browning's rushes upwards and onwards, its drapery now streaming in the wind,

now draggled in the mountain rivers, making, with impetuous lawlessness, for the goal. Mrs. Browning has scarcely a poem undefaced by palpable error or extravagance: Tennyson's poetry is characterized by that perilous absence of fault, which seems hardly consistent with supreme genius. Between our greatest living poet, therefore, and the greatest of all poetesses, there can be instituted no general comparison. But in *A Vision of Poets*, and in *The Poet's Vow*, there is much to recall Tennyson. In the former, the individual portraits, in the latter, the central thought, point unmistakably to *The Palace of Art*. But even when most like Tennyson, Mrs. Browning is unmistakably herself. If the succession of individual likenesses in *A Vision of Poets* recalls that in *The Palace of Art*, as the melody sometimes suggests that of *The Two Voices*, there is a boldness, a sweeping breadth of touch, in Mrs. Browning's delineations, belonging to herself alone. If the thought of *The Poet's Vow*,—the fatal error and deadly sin of preferring self-culture to human sympathy,—is the same as in *The Palace of Art*, the imagery is totally dissimilar from Tennyson's, and is adapted, but for the intervention of some of Mrs. Browning's tantalizing dimness, to come upon the general heart with more powerful directness than the more elaborate idealization of Tennyson. The poet gave the thought in allegory: the poetess gives it in life. One or two of the portraits of "God's prophets of the Beautiful," from the hand of Mrs. Browning, cannot be passed over. They occur, of course, in *A Vision of Poets*.

"There, Shakspeare! on whose forehead climb  
The crowns o' the world. Oh, eyes sublime—  
With tears and laughters for all time!"



Here, Milton's eyes strike piercing-dim:  
 The shapes of suns and stars did swim  
 Like clouds from them, and granted him

God for sole vision. \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

And Sappho, with that gloriole

Of ebon hair on calmed brows—

O poet woman! none forgoes

The leap, attaining the repose!

\* \* \* \* \*

And Burns, with pungent passionings

Set in his eyes \* \* \*

This is a critique on Burns. When you have said this, you have spoken the one indispensable word concerning him; if you wrote folios on his poetry, you could hardly supplement, however you might illustrate, those “pungent passionings.”

“ And Shelley, in his white ideal  
 All statue blind.”

That, too, is marvellous: in philosophy profound, in pathos genuine, in poetry perfect. There are few such examples of condensation in the language.

“ And visionary Coleridge, who  
 Did sweep his thoughts as angels do  
 Their wings with cadence up the Blue.”

It is little to say that these lines contain a biography.

“ And poor, proud Byron,—sad as grave,  
 And salt as life: forlornly brave,  
 And quivering with the dart he drove.”

This is very bold, and in almost any case might be pronounced towering presumption. But Mrs. Browning had a right to say it; she whose intellectual and imaginative powers are to the full as great as those of Byron, and who has never stained, by one foul image or impure emotion, the gold and azure of her genius.

*The Poet's Vow* is one of those poems in which there is exhibited a certain mode or habit of poetic representation, of so frequent occurrence in the pages of Mrs. Browning, that it may be pronounced a principal part of her manner, or mannerism. At first, you are merely astonished and bewildered. You know not who are the actors, what is the subject, at what point the narrative is commenced. But there comes gleam after gleam of backward-falling light; and when finally you open on the full meaning of the poem, and when the cataract of its passion flashes on your eye, the light streams along the whole avenue by which you have approached. To illustrate this peculiarity in detail would occupy too much space; but no better example of it than this poem could be cited. I must content myself, however, with quoting one or two stanzas, not illustrative of this point, though individually remarkable. The poet speaks thus:—

“ Hear me forswear man's sympathies,  
His pleasant yea and no —  
His riot on the piteous earth  
Whereon his thistles grow !  
His changing love — with stars above !  
His pride — with graves below !”

This expresses his determination to put away from him all that can break the serenity of self-culture, to abandon men and seek the grand solitudes of nature. The thought in the

two last lines in Goethe's, and has been made familiar to all by the iteration of Mr. Carlyle. But I do not remember a case in which it was more finely applied.

The solitary divides his wealth among his friends, and bids a determined adieu to his brothers who "love him true as brothers do," and to Rosalind, his betrothed, who loves him as no brother can. The following words are spoken by Sir Roland, whom the poet would fain have the accepted lover of his forsaken Rosalind. Both she and Sir Roland, of course, scorn the union, as well as the dower which the poet offers; and Sir Roland addresses him thus:—

" And thou, O distant, sinful heart,  
 That climbest up so high,  
 To wrap and blind thee with the snows  
 That cause to dream and die—  
 What blessing can, from lips of man,  
 Approach thee with his sigh ?

Ay ! what from earth — create for man,  
 And moaning in his moan ?  
 Ay ! what from stars — revealed to man, .  
 And man-named, one by one ?  
 Ay, more ! what blessing can be given,  
 Where the Spirits seven do show in heaven  
 A MAN upon the Throne ?—

A man on earth HE wandered once,  
 All meek and undefiled :  
 And those who loved Him, said ' He wept, —  
 None ever said He smiled,  
 Yet there might have been a smile unseen,  
 When He bowed his holy face, I ween,  
 To bless that happy child."

There is here another illustration of the way in which the

vital Christianity of Mrs. Browning leads her constantly to the purest loveliness and the deepest truth. Tennyson has struck no note so high in *The Palace of Art*.

Rosalind dies of a broken heart, leaving a written scroll, to be put in her coffin, and laid, with her body, at the door of the lonely castle, where her lover dwells apart. At midnight the poet opened his bolted door, to look upon the midnight sky. The stars shine on the face of the corpse. He sees and reads the scroll. The two following verses are part of its contents.

“I have prayed for thee with bitter sobs,  
When passion’s course was free !  
I have prayed for thee with silent lips,  
In the anguish none could see !  
They whispered oft, ‘ She sleepeth soft ’—  
But I only prayed for thee.

\*       \*       \*       \*

I charge thee, by the living’s prayer,  
And the dead’s silentness,  
To wring from out thy soul a cry  
Which God shall hear and bless !  
Lest Heaven’s own palm droop in my hand,  
And pale among the saints I stand,  
A saint companionless.”

The victory is won.

“Bow lower down before the throne  
Triumphant Rosalind !  
He boweth on thy corpse his face  
And weepeth as the blind.  
’Twas a dread sight to see them so—  
For the senseless corpse rocked to and fro  
With the wail of his living mind.

But dreader sight, could such be seen,  
His inward mind did lie;  
Whose long subjected humanness  
Gave out its lion cry,  
And fiercely rent its tenement  
In a mortal agony.

I tell you, friends, had you heard his wail,  
'T would haunt you in court and mart,  
And in merry feast, until you set  
Your cup down to depart—  
That weeping wild of a reckless child  
From a proud man's broken heart.

O broken heart, O broken vow,  
That wore so proud a feature!  
God, grasping as a thunderbolt  
The man's rejected nature,  
Smote him therewith — i' the presence high  
Of his so worshipped earth and sky  
That looked on all indifferently —  
A wailing human creature."

You might read that after Shakspeare and *Æschylus*, and yet pronounce its excellence supreme.

Our inspection of the *Drama of Exile* may have enabled us to form some idea of Mrs. Browning's manner, in the treatment of those sublime themes which are, in a sense, removed from human sympathy. As in a region congenial to her soaring imagination and dauntless intellect, we found her, with steady poise, casting her illuminining glance around the abode of the Seraphim, following her high argument above the Aonian Mount and Muse's Hill. We have had one brief look, also, into her mode of handling subjects connected, directly or indirectly, with the principles of her own art. In *A Vision of Poets*, which was specified rather

than criticised, her idea of a poet's training is set before us; and *The Poet's Vow* shows that she has not only exhibited unconsciously in her works, but presented consciously to her own mind, the conviction, that the Human is the noblest theme and inspiration of poetry, above all the beauties, enticements, and meanings of physical nature.

There is still at least one other class, demanding separate consideration, among the poems of Mrs. Browning. It consists of those which may be most broadly characterized as poems of personal emotion, and which are more expressly to be described, as delineations of feeling peculiar to the female heart. The passion of love in the maiden heart, the devotion of the wife, and the affection of the mother, are severally and fully portrayed. In each case, the emotion is conceived and exhibited with a power of sympathy, and a dramatic force, of which it is, I believe, but slight applause to say, that they are totally unrivalled. Mrs. Browning has given us the counterpart to all the poetry of chivalry. Troubadour and minstrel sung for ages in homage to woman; knights and monarchs waited for the smile of beauty; the imagination of Europe exhausted itself in devising heroic adventures, by which, penetrating through dark woods, crossing tempestuous seas, fighting giants and monsters, breaking enchantments and prison walls, the bold soldier forced his way to his ladye-love. But the counterpart in this picture, the devotion of the woman to him she loves, was wanting; and we stand in unfeigned astonishment as Mrs. Browning reveals to us what a woman's passion means. This extraordinary writer is always original; but here she had the field almost to herself. We feel her words to be true: they come on us with the authoritative emphasis of nature, coined in the mint of the heart and accepted by the heart at once. Yet none but a woman would have had a

*right* to assert, that passion so intense and self-annihilating could be inspired by man in the heart of woman. Ties of relationship, worldly station, riches, life, are cast into the crucible ; they are instantly not only melted but dissolved and cast aloft as impalpable vapor. All this happens, and the crucible is still, itself, firm ; the heart is yet unbroken : until the passion is unrequited, until the flame is left to eat the heart itself, and then it too dissolves in ashes and death.

In *Isobel's Child*, it is the maternal instinct that is portrayed. The poem suffers greatly from accumulation of useless and distracting machinery. The nurse's dream appears to me simply an incumbrance, and far less ought to have been said about owls and elements. But the beat of the mother's heart falls clear and true amid all this ; and when we penetrate far enough to hear it, our own heart cannot but beat in unison. The incident of the poem, stripped of accessories, is very simple. A mother has long watched, in agony of hope and fear, by the sick-bed of her child, for whose recovery she earnestly prays. Her petition is granted, and the child recovers. Her heart is, for a brief hour, filled with pure and unspeakable ecstasy. But, by not very happy imagery, it is revealed to her, that her prayer has deprived her babe of the bliss of present heaven. So she recalls her prayer, yields him up, and herself presently expires. I do not attempt to convey any idea of this composition ; but do not the following lines, spoken by Isobel in anticipation of the death of her son, express with strange exactness, yet no less marvellous poetic power, the feeling of a mother looking on the grave of an only child.

" How I shall shiver every day  
In thy June sunshine, knowing where  
The grave-grass keeps it from his fair

Still cheeks ! and feel at every tread  
*His little body which is dead*  
*And hidden in the turf'y fold,*  
*Doth make the whole warm earth a-cold !”*

But her love for her babe is stronger than her joy in possessing him. When his corpse lies before her, she speaks thus :—

“ I changed the cruel prayer I made,  
And bowed my meekened face and prayed  
That God would do His will ! and thus  
He did it, nurse ! He parted *us*.  
And His sun shows victorious  
The dead calm face,— and *I* am calm ;  
And heaven is hearkening a new psalm.”

From many remarkable poems, such as *The Romaunt of the Page*, *Bertha in the Lane*, *Lady Geraldine's Courtship*, and so on, each of which could hardly have failed to make a reputation, I select, for special notice, *The Rhyme of the Duchess May*. This, take it all in all, is, in my opinion, Mrs. Browning's masterpiece. All the exceptions which can possibly be taken to it may be summed up in a single sentence : while it is difficult to say how many specks and flaws might have been covered up from sight, in the broad and steady blaze of its general power. The comparison of an ancient wood, standing “ mute adown,” to a “ full heart having prayed ;” such an expression as “ the castle seethed in blood,” when we hear of but five hundred archers besieging it, and when the besieged have not a score of men killed ; the tediousness and apparent triviality of the refrain about the little birds ; the monotony of the recurrence of the words “ toll slowly,” which altogether fail, as any words would have failed, to produce the effect,

on the ear or imagination of the reader, which would have been produced by the tolling of a death-knell:—these exhaust the heads of offending, which can be specified, with any show of reason, against the poem. I think each of them is more or less objectionable, and I would totally do away with that weakening and irritating “toll slowly;” but they are worthy of notice not for their importance but their unimportance. Contemplating the piece, which consists of several hundred lines, in its entireness, it is found to be a production, whose rare artistic completeness is only less remarkable than the quality of its detailed drawing and local color. It could have been the work only of one to whom long practice had imparted the skill of consummate art; and no poet could have produced it, save one on whose burning genius consummate art had exercised no constraining power.

In considering this poem, as, indeed, in forming a judgment of any of Mrs. Browning’s poems, it is necessary clearly to discriminate two things: the realistic basis, and the imaginative form. Not Byron, not Scott, not Burns was a greater realist than Mrs. Browning: not one of them could take, with surer hand, the lineaments of living passion. But the imaginative drapery in which she clothes her figures is of that sort which we formerly saw, loose-flowing as the mist, perpetually suggesting the supernatural or mysterious, gorgeous, indeed, in coloring, but in effect bewildering. In *The Rhyme of the Duchess May*, the groundwork, laid in with uncompromising realism, is the passion of wifely devotion, triumphing not over but through death. The covering in which imagination wraps this central passion—the outward form of the poem—will strike many as romantic. If it is insisted that the element of romance too much abounds, let it be so: the realistic

basis still remains. But I think that if the piece is fairly and deliberately viewed, it will be found that the charge of excessive romance has no force whatever. The central portion of the poem, that to which alone the accusation can apply, is professedly and expressly imaginative. It comes, with its passion and its change, between the stillness before and after, like a meteor between two calm celestial spaces. The poetess sits in a churchyard; there she reads, the church bell tolling deathfully the while, an "ancient rhyme," a tale of life and sin, weird and wondrous, which would contradict all our expectations, if it proved staid and regular, like a modern copy of verses; when the Rhyme is finished, we are again in the churchyard, and a deeper calm is around us than before. Surely, if the delineation of the passion at the heart of the poem is true, there is here no unwarrantable license of imagination.

The description of the churchyard, with which the poem opens, does not long detain the reader. The Rhyme itself soon hurries him into the main current of interest. The Castle of Linteged, the scene of the whole incident, is thus boldly dashed in:—

"Down the sun dropt large and red, on the towers of Linteged,—  
Toll slowly.

Lance and spear upon the height, bristling strange in fiery light,  
While the castle stood in shade.

There, the castle stood up black, with the red sun at its back,—  
Toll slowly.

Like a sullen smouldering pyre, with a top that flickers fire  
When the wind is on its track."

To this castle, three months before this time, the Duchess May had come, as the bride of Sir Guy of Linteged. She had been the ward of her uncle, the old Earl of Leigh,

who betrothed her in her childhood, for the sake of her inheritance, to his son, Lord Leigh. On coming of age, however, she was rather more than indifferent to the young lord, and haughtily defied both him and his father. The son, as base and avaricious as the father, declares that, let her love him or let her loathe him, let her live or die, marry her he will. Then:—

“ Up she rose with scornful eyes, as her father’s child might rise,—  
Toll slowly.  
‘ Thy hound’s blood, my lord of Leigh, stains thy knightly heel,’  
quoth she,  
‘ And he moans not where he lies.’  
‘ But a woman’s will dies hard, in the hall or on the sward !’—  
Toll slowly.  
‘ By that grave, my lords, which made me orphaned girl and dowered  
lady,  
I deny you wife and ward.’”

This Duchess May is one of the most admirably drawn figures that ever came from the pencil of art. Every line is so definite, every tint so bright and clear. Her whole external existence, her haughtiness, her beauty, her queenliness of mien and manner, are touched in with the airy vividness of Scott: her inmost heart is laid bare, her boundless womanly tenderness, her inflexible womanly pride, her womanly ecstasy of self-sacrifice,—with, I speak deliberately, the power of a Shakspeare. In some respects, she reminds one of a large class of female characters; Scott’s Die Vernon, Shakspeare’s Beatrice, still more closely, Currer Bell’s Shirley. Shirley, indeed, comes exceedingly near; she is the Duchess May in a novel, as the Duchess May is Shirley in an atmosphere of epic grandeur. But, on the whole, the Duchess May must be ranked with the Juliets and Desdemonas, far

beyond any flight of Scott or Currer Bell, and perhaps not admitting of being introduced save where tragedy in sceptred pall sweeps by. Beatrice is one of the most charming characters ever portrayed, but she could not have died like Desdemona, to whom it is not the epithet, charming, that we would apply.

The Duchess May bestows her hand upon Sir Guy of Linteged, and the bridal train, pursued by the Leighs, dashes off at midnight, through storm and rain, for the castle among the hills.

“ And the bridegroom led the flight on his red-roan steed of might,—  
Toll slowly.  
And the bride lay on his arm, still, as if she felt no harm,  
Smiling out into the night.”

This lets us see the essential contrast, which, in its unity, completes the delineation of the lady: defiance of kindred, scorn of all terrors of midnight and storm, dauntless courage and inflexible pride, where love is to be vindicated,—perfect rest, submission, confidence, haleyon repose, as of a child on the breast of its mother, as of a dewdrop in the bosom of a rose, in the encircling arms of love accepted and returned.

Sir Guy and his bride reach the castle in safety, and three happy months pass by. Then the castle is besieged by Lord Leigh, the rejected suitor, and after a fortnight’s siege is about to fall into his hands. Ruthless and grovelling, he is still determined to wed the Duchess, though it be over the corpse of her present husband. In this the lady is resolved, through life and death, to foil him. Attired in purple robes, and with her ducal coronet on her brow, she looks down upon him from the wall, withering him with her scorn. Meantime Sir Guy has been

superintending operations on the east tower, the highest of all. He perceives that hope is gone, bethinks him that he alone stands between his wife and followers and safety, that resistance at the breach would result simply in the destruction of all, and determines at once to put an end to his life. His wife, he thinks, will soon get over her distress, soothed and entreated by his victorious foes, who made war on her only for his sake :

“‘ She will weep her woman’s tears, she will pray her woman’s prayers,’—

Toll slowly.

But her heart is young in pain, and her hopes will spring again  
By the suntime of her years.’”

He binds his men by oath not to strike a blow that night. He then demands, of his two most faithful knights, the last service of leading the good steed which he rode on that unforgotten night journey, in full harness, up the turret stair, to the place where he stands. He will leap from the wall and so die on his battle-steed, as a good knight ought. But the Duchess May has a heart as strong as his. She is bound, on the one hand, by her womanly honor, not to wed Lord Leigh: on the other, she will show her husband what lightnings may lurk amid the softness of woman’s tears. As the knights are goading the horse up the stair, she comes from her chamber and inquires their errand. They tell her that one half-hour completes the breach, and that her lord, wild with despair, is about to ride the castle wall. For a moment, the thought of love past, and the weight of all this anguish, overcome her: she bows her head, and tear after tear is heard falling to the ground. The knights, gentle in their valor, assay to comfort her :—

"Get thee in, thou soft ladye! — here, is never a place for thee!" —  
Toll slowly.

'Braid thy hair and clasp thy gown, that thy beauty in its moan  
May find grace with Leigh of Leigh.'"

In a moment she is herself again: love's pride sets its iron  
heel on love's tenderness.

"She stood up in bitter case, with a pale yet steady face,  
Toll slowly,

Like a statue thunderstruck, which though quivering seems to look  
Right against the thunder-place."

These two lines are not alone in Mrs. Browning's poetry: they belong to a considerable class, which might be cited to prove that she has attained the very highest success in the very highest order of poetic effort. This by the way. The Duchess May brushes impatiently aside the well intentioned kindness of her consolers, and takes herself the rein of the good steed. He now needs no goading:

"Soft he neighed to answer her, and then followed up the stair  
For the love of her sweet look.

\* \* \* . \* \* \* \* \*

On the east tower, high'st of all,— there, where never a hoof did  
fall,—

Toll slowly,

Out they swept, a vision steady, — noble steed and lovely lady,  
Calm as if in bower or stall."

The passage succeeding this, it would be totally absurd to attempt, by any description, to bring before the reader. The wife has determined that, if her husband leaps over that wall, she will leap over with him. He endeavors frantically to urge the horse over alone. The breach falls in as she pleads, and the crash of wall and window, the

shouts of foemen and the shrieks of the dying, rise in one roar around the pair. But love is victor. In vain he wrings her small hands twice and thrice in twain. She clings to him as in a swoon of agonized determination. At last, when the horse, rearing on the verge of the precipitous battlement, could no longer be stopped, "she upsprang, she rose upright," and took her seat beside him :

" And her head was on his breast, where she smiled as one at rest,—  
Toll slowly.

' Ring,' she cried, ' O vesper bell, in the beechwood's old chapelle !  
But the passing bell rings best.'

They have caught out at the rein, which Sir Guy threw loose—in vain,—

Toll slowly.

For the horse in stark despair, with his front hoofs poised in air,  
On the last verge rears amain.

Now he hangs the rocks between — and his nostrils curdle in,—  
Toll slowly.

Now he shivers head and hoof — and the flakes of foam fall off;  
And his face grows fierce and thin !

And a look of human woe from his staring eyes did go,—  
Toll slowly.

And a sharp cry uttered he, in a foretold agony  
Of the headlong death below,—

And, 'Ring, ring, thou passing bell,' still she cried, ' i' the old chapelle !'

Toll slowly.

Then back-toppling, crashing back — a dead weight flung out to wrack,

Horse and riders overfell."

Sterner realism than this description cannot be conceived. That horse is frightfully true to fact. Mrs. Browning has

once more shown that only on the rugged crags of the real can imagination preen her wings for flight to the regions of the ideal. The passion here, too, doubt it not, is true: Mrs. Browning's heart sympathetically thrilled with it, as she touched that smile on the face of the bride, sinking into the abyss of death in her husband's arms: with all her gentleness, Mrs. Browning could have smiled that smile, and ridden that wall! Woman's love can make of the chariot of death a car of victory; amid the flames of the funeral pyre it can find the softest bed. There is even a strictly practical value in this realization, to our perceptions and sympathies, of transcendent passion. It furnishes us with the key to many singular biographical problems. I consider it a literal fact, that the love of such women as Esther Johnson and Esther Vanhomrigh, for such a man as Swift, which, tried by any ordinary rules, seems simply madness, has been rendered far more clearly intelligible and conceivable, by such delineations of female nature, as have been given us by Charlotte Bronte and Mrs. Browning.

The wild ancient Rhyme having sung itself out, we return to the calm of the churchyard, and are reminded of a serenity enveloping and subduing all passion. The poetess fixes her eye on a little grave beneath a willow tree, on which is engraved an inscription, stating that it is the grave of a child of three years. Mrs. Browning, however she may indulge the play of dramatic sympathy, has far too stable an intellect to waver, for a moment, from the conviction, that passion can never be the *highest*. From her thoughts, too, the essential points of the morality preached from the Mount are never absent; she draws, in her own rapid, inimitable manner, rather suggesting than detailing, a contrast between the passage of the child-soul to heaven,

encompassed by star-wheels and angel wings, and the passionate dashing up of those frantic lovers against the thick-bossed shield of God's judgment. And so the poem ends in rest and stillness: leaving us in silent wonder at its artistic symmetry and matchless execution, and gazing up into the celestial blue which overarches all its passion.

Thus has Mrs. Browning poetically realized the feelings of the bride and of the wife: she has depicted with corresponding power and delicacy the feelings of the mother. In *Isobel's Child*, as I have already remarked, it is the maternal instinct which is the central subject of representation. It is, however, in *Aurora Leigh*, that Mrs. Browning's delineation of this affection, in all its tenderness and in all its rapture, attains its highest perfection. To do even approximate justice to the succession of passages in which, in the poem named, Marian Erle and her babe are the objects of portraiture, would demand a separate critique. But were we to embrace all that is revealed in one view to us of woman in the *Drama of Exile*, *The Duchess May*, *Isobel's Child*, and *Aurora Leigh*, not to mention other poems, we should find it difficult to dispute the position that this poetess has sung of her own sex, as no poet or poetess ever did.

Of *Aurora Leigh*, as Mrs. Browning's last and longest poem, it will be proper to speak at somewhat greater length.

Whatever the estimate of this poem, at which we may on the whole arrive, no doubt can be entertained that it is the finest which has appeared in Great Britain since *In Memoriam*. Merely to specify its beauties would occupy an extended space. The descriptions of English scenery in the early books may challenge comparison with anything in the language. Vivid as if resting in the very light of clear English mornings, fresh as if the dew-drops glistened on the page, broad and powerful as is the work of strong imagina-

tion, touched everywhere with those more playfully delicate lights which are commonly attributed to fancy, these limnings must make every Englishman proud of a country that can be so described, and of a poetess who can so describe it. To the delineations of Italian scenery, a similar character may be ascribed, the necessary changes being of course made. Even without a personal familiarity with that scenery, the accuracy of such descriptions is instinctively relied on: there is in them an honest minuteness which is its own guarantee. Besides these more general delineations, there are in this poem certain descriptive passages, such as the view of London, and the sail by night along the Sardinian sea-coast towards Italy, which would require a separate and more elaborate characterization. They are among those solitary efforts of genius to which, with scientific precision, we may apply the epithets, magnificent and sublime. Turning to the human figures, Marian Erle is in all respects worthy of Mrs. Browning's genius. The historical existence of Emma Lyon renders it no outrage on poetic probability to suppose such ability and such character as those of Marian Erle in an English girl born in the lowest order of society; nor in the present diffusion of the elements of knowledge, is the mode, in which she is represented as acquiring some considerable culture, by any means strained or unnatural. It must, of course, be permitted to a poet to violate minor probabilities: a reasonable possibility is all that can be demanded. Marian Erle is imbued with true poetic life: we approve, admire, and love her: and so perfectly are we interested and enthralled by the tenderness, the loveliness, the inexpressible pathos, of which she is made the centre, that it is only afterwards we reflect on the marvellous genius displayed by the poetess.

It may appear that after such a specification, and with the

clear admission that it might be very greatly extended, no alternative remains but to pronounce *Aurora Leigh*, on the whole, a successful performance, a poetical achievement at once noble and complete. I am compelled to state that, after careful deliberation, my conclusion has been the reverse. In all the other poems by Mrs. Browning, with which I am acquainted, the defects, though sometimes great, are not sufficient to neutralize the excellence: to *Aurora Leigh*, all things considered, the only word to be applied is "failure." The grounds of this opinion will be briefly indicated.

In the first place, nearly all the exceptions which critics have incidentally taken to Mrs. Browning's poems come here into application, and certain of them can be urged with greater force than in any former instance. The style, indeed, is somewhat simplified, and if parenthesis and involution still prevail to a greater extent than is now necessary to any one using the English language, the charge of unintelligibility, or even of decided difficulty, can hardly be brought against the poem. But there is a considerable number of those overstrained and extravagant images, those sublime conceits towards which Mrs. Browning has so often manifested a tendency.

"Then the bitter sea  
Inexorably pushed between us both,  
*And sweeping up the ship with my despair*  
*Threw us out as a pasture to the stars."*

Mr. Carlyle has been bold enough to declare that Shakespeare sometimes premeditates the sheerest bombast. It was more probably through momentary negligence that Mrs. Browning permitted this unpardonable passage to escape her pen. At all events, no Homeric bellman, no Ossianic juvenile, ever perpetrated purer nonsense, or more

unredeemed bombast. What possible resemblance there can be between a ship and a pasture, why and when stars go out to grass, and wherefore, having so gone out, they should feed on ships and young ladies—these are questions of insoluble mystery, but hardly more mysterious than how Mrs. Browning could crowd so many absurdities into two lines. The lines are enough in themselves seriously to damage a great poem: and though perhaps the worst, they constitute by no means a solitary example of extravagance.

In the next place the melody of *Aurora Leigh* is defective. There are indeed passages in which the thoughts and images fairly float themselves away in the sphere-dance of harmony; wonderful passages, in which it is again demonstrated that true melody in language is but the rhythmic cadence natural to a mood of thought, imagination and expression, sufficiently elevated, calm and mighty. But over wide spaces of the poem the ear finds no delight, and the ear most rightfully demands from the poet what the eye demands from the painter. In a very fair review of *Aurora Leigh*, published in Blackwood's Magazine, a method of estimate was applied to the poem of a sort which Edgar Poe strongly insisted on. Certain passages were given without the form of verse. Has Mrs. Browning read those passages? If she has, and if the impression made on her mind was that conveyed irresistibly to mine, how did she contemplate the fact that her poetry suggested Mr. Kingsley's prose? It is no commendation of Mrs. Browning, and no disparagement to Mr. Kingsley, to say that it could only be in the case of utter, though perhaps temporary, abrogation of her highest qualities, that a production of the former could recall the work of the latter; yet it is so. The crowding, the vehemence, the feverish haste and impatience, which so frequently characterise Mr. Kingsley's novels, can hardly fail to be

suggested by such passages as those to which allusion is now made. It cannot be pleaded that these are exceptional. The heroine invariably talks like one of Mr. Kingsley's characters. There is a lack, besides, of tenderer strains to refresh and relieve the ear; the atmosphere wants calm, the landscape wants perspective. Once more, the irreverent or seeming irreverent use of the names of the Persons of the Trinity, which had been formerly objected to Mrs. Browning, is carried further in *Aurora Leigh* than in any of her previous poems. No defence can be offered for this circumstance. It may be perfectly true that Mrs. Browning's irreverence is only seeming, and that it results mainly from a constant habit of reference, in life, to the will of the Deity. But the fact remains, and is indubitable, that the simple and sincere worshippers of God throughout the British islands will be pained at heart by the words of Mrs. Browning. Something called reverence by Goethe and Carlyle may be consistent with a familiarity in the use of Divine names, such as we instinctively shrink from in the case of a sister, a mother, a father, a departed relative, a tenderly beloved friend; but if Mrs. Browning would have her books associated with the Bible, the Pilgrim's Progress, the Christian Year, in the homes and hearts of simple, godly people, she must condescend to a reverence conceivable in itself, and uncontradicted by the whole analogy of nature. The example of Tennyson ought surely to have preserved her from this great and pervading error. Genius need not be ashamed to learn from its equal; and Mrs. Browning would do well to meditate on Tennyson's invariable mode of reference to

“That which we dare invoke to bless.”

These are serious objections; yet they are the least im-

portant which can be urged against *Aurora Leigh*. They are the light musketry; the park of artillery has still to open fire.

Aurora Leigh is herself an essentially defective character. We do not love her: we cannot love her. Had Mrs. Browning not instructed us, it might have been otherwise. But since Mrs. Browning, in her Eve and her Duchess May, has shown us what woman can be, what sort of women we ought to love, it is impossible for us to reject and scorn all her teaching, in the single act of accepting *Aurora Leigh*. The intellectual character of this young lady may pass; she has even a certain bare and masculine sense of justice, and willingness to be kind: but real warmth of heart, true womanly tenderness, she has not. She is generically different from any other female character from the pencil of Mrs. Browning. None other which Mrs. Browning has drawn could have been, on the whole, so cold, hard, heartless, as, on the occasion of the death of her aunt, Aurora Leigh shows herself to be. It is absolutely astonishing that Mrs. Browning has permitted her heroine to exhibit no trace of generous relenting, of natural grief, of mere human tenderness, on the death of one who really loved her. There is no dew-drop in the bosom of this rose.

The heroine is a failure in respect of the intention of the poetess. She must be considered as claiming our admiration and love; and she is not worthy of their being accorded her. But Aurora Leigh is, I think, true to nature: realistically, if not poetically, the portraiture may be correct. What is perhaps the most important of all the charges to be brought against the poem before us still remains to be made. In the portraiture of Romney Leigh, and in the whole treatment of socialism, the necessary realistic basis wholly fails.

Mrs. Browning is in theory a stern realist. She earnestly proclaims that the Homer of his time must always write of the present. Throughout *Aurora Leigh*, she aims at bold, broad, truthful delineation. She takes her reader to the purlieus of St. Giles's, and writes off fearlessly the curse of the ruffian, the slang of the prostitute. So far,—it may be,—good. The truth as to the real and the ideal, the present and the past, in relation to poetical composition, is easily defined. In the real is found the only true mode of ascent to the ideal; the loftiest tree must have its roots in the ground. The present is the subject of all poetry, inasmuch as the substantial frame-work of man's moral and intellectual nature is, in essentials, in all ages, the same. Costume, using the word in its widest sense, varies from age to age; it is a noble work of a perfectly informed imagination to picture forth, in perfect exactness, that worn by any past generation; but the living men whom that costume enveloped, in their essential attributes of reason and passion, can be accurately conceived only by knowledge of the men that think and love in the present. To all objections that her descriptions in *Aurora Leigh* are too realistic, Mrs. Browning will almost glory in the reply that she paints the life. But the objection now urged is that her realism is in the cases mentioned, utterly at fault, and that her realism failing, her idealization becomes of necessity mere vagueness, vapour, nonentity. A single illustration from the poem itself will show Mrs. Browning that it is not in respect of theory or method that the present exception is taken. Her view of London is sufficiently real and grandly ideal. The light of imagination is there, but it falls on a real river, on real spires and palaces. Her Romney Leigh and her view of socialism have no such basis of reality, of fact; they are not the stuff of which the poetic dream can make anything; they are dreams about dreams.

There have, in all ages, been individual enthusiasts; but in no age could an individual enthusiast have been representative; and even as an enthusiast, Romney Leigh is impossible. He is represented as a man of ability, without the smallest trace of intellectual power; he is represented as a man of statistics and of science, while his conception of human regeneration is purely fanciful, and precisely as scientific as the proposition that twice five make out the dozen. He represents the age in a way in which a fifth-monarchy man, of *ne plus ultra* principles, would represent the age of Cromwell. Joe Smith would be considered an inappropriate hero for a poem descriptive of the present time. I am personally of opinion that he might be made the centre of a great poem. But, whether or no, the Mormon leader would represent incomparably more of the present time than is represented by Romney Leigh. Thus delusive as representative of his time, he is in himself unsubstantial. There is no actuality or life in him: He wants bone. Nothing can convince the reader that he walks the solid earth. This circumstance is fatal.

The general conclusion from Mrs. Browning's new poem is, that socialistic schemes are nonsensical. But Mrs. Browning does not exhibit the slightest degree of knowledge of the science of the social system, the special science of the present time. She has studied in the school of Carlyle: the doctrines and methods of which school bear almost precisely the same relation to the social regeneration of peoples, as the scholastic logic bears to the construction of railways. Mrs. Browning has not even skirted the border of that realistic field in which the noblest idealizations of the present time are to be planted. Facts and figures are not poetry, but they may be the materials from which a mighty imagination will build up the noblest poems. Mrs. Browning has such an imagin-

ation. But she has no surmise that, in dry statistical tables is to be found the most glorious theme that can invite imagination in these years: she has totally overlooked a factor which is necessary, I say not to the solution, but to the smallest contribution towards a solution, of the great problem, at which, to say the least, she looks. To reiterate abstract maxims, were they elaborated by the combined intellects of Bacon and Goethe, comes here to little; to discover that misery abounds in the world and merely to depict it, in colors however true and striking, is almost equally valueless; to fling abroad vague denunciation upon those who, in good and in bad report, with less light or with more, strive earnestly through long years to benefit their fellow men, is in itself worse than useless, and has now become hopelessly commonplace. Through the whole history of mankind, the world has been a place of sorrow as of sin. The brightest year that ever swept, in kindly change of seasons, over the earth, saw enough of individual distress, to drive a man, were it presented to his imagination with vivid poetic power, raving mad. So surely as the race continues as it is, so surely must this, for many centuries to come, be still the case. The man who cannot deliberately envisage this dread circumstance, who cannot thus look before and after, and yet retain the faith that earth is a place in which to live and work, becomes a rebel against the order of things; in consistence, he ought to commit suicide or accept atheism. But the strong and healthful man will, we shall agree, find it, on the whole, rational and advisable to submit to the conditions of his existence and to believe in God. To enable him to do so, it is necessary not that he should accept any delusive representation of the present or Utopian prediction for the future, but that he should perceive in the history of man *a progress*, that he should be assured that, however

slowly, the evil and the sorrowful recede, and the good and the joyful advance. Now there is one fact which the great science of statistics has already proved, in reference at least to that island which is the principal scene of Mrs. Browning's poem ; — that crime and misery are on the decline. Amid all the vociferation of Mr. Carlyle and his school, in full view of stupendous individual crimes, with ready admission of multitudinous cases of individual distress, the wise man will calmly and earnestly fix his eye on this fact ; on the bare figures in which it is inscribed he will look with unspeakable joy, nay reverence, as if he saw them traced in light by the finger of God. Ahriman, they proclaim, though fighting sternly, does draw back his foot. The ocean rolls darkly beneath a troubled sky, but the sand-grains are being deposited, year by year, which will one day build the broad continent right into the sunlight. The night is still murky, but a rim of light slowly broadens out to dawn. How magnificently, how epically, might Mrs. Browning, with such an imagination as hers, have concluded her poem by showing us this ring of light on the horizon of the world, this aureole which proves that the sorrowful earth is still among the family of God ! But except out of realism no true idealization can arise ; and the realism which it is necessary to master in this case is to be found in a science, which Mrs. Browning probably despises and of which she is certainly ignorant. The conclusion to which, in *Aurora Leigh*, we are conducted, is exceedingly true, and is presented in very beautiful poetry : but, in originality and practical utility, it is not one whit superior to the doctrine preached on the subject, any Sunday in the year, in the churches and chapels of England. Miss Leigh's platonism cannot in the least affect the state of the case : the originality wanted was not to be had by looking across two thousand years, but by accepting the present, not in the philos-

ophy of Plato, but in criminal reports, in the history of free trade, in the works of Grey, MacCulloch and Chalmers, in the letters of Colonel Jebb.

*Aurora Leigh*, then, despite countless beauties, despite passages sufficient to furnish forth anthology after anthology, despite an exuberant display of that genius which makes Mrs. Browning the greatest poetess in the world, is a failure. Why is it so? It would be tiresome and probably vain to attempt to answer the question at length. But one cause, perhaps a principal cause, seems to lie in that recoil from common men and exoteric doctrines, to which an early reference was made. The influence of Mr. Carlyle upon Mrs. Browning has been very powerful; and it has been evil. To apply to her the words used in a different connection by a thoroughly able writer in the Edinburgh Review, she has more and more learned from Mr. Carlyle what she could not have learned "from Greek philosophy or Holy Writ, a fierce and unenlightened disdain . . . . of the MUL-TITUDE."

"Heavens,  
I think I should be almost popular  
If this went on!"

So exclaims Aurora, and though passages might be quoted which seem to point to a different conclusion, this indicates the doctrine of the book. Yet there was ONE of whom his disciples were not ashamed to declare that "the common people heard him gladly."

To refer, save in the most general way, to Mrs. Browning's smaller poems, is now impossible. Some of them, as *The Cry of the Children*, *Couper's Grave*, *The Cry of the Human*, and *The Sleep*, are absolute masterpieces. The first is one of the greatest of strictly modern poems. It

demonstrates that a pathos may be got out of cotton fuzz and rattling machinery, to which the woes of Achilles and Hector, and the sublime sorrows of battling goddesses, around windy Troy, were a very poor affair: it shows that, though tragedy on the boards may be looked upon with very dry eyes, the real tragedy is still amongst us. The poem reminds us of Hood. The pathos of Hood is true and piercing; it is the pathos of bare fact, of life; it is the tear of sorrow itself, falling upon the heart. But *The Cry of the Children*, to a realism as literal as Hood's, adds an imaginative gleam such as Hood could not impart. The piece is radiant with poetic fervor. There is perhaps no respect in which it is not a study: in language, in melody, in imagery, in truthfulness.

*Couper's Grave* is an outburst of emotion, irrepressible in its earnestness, unspeakable in its tenderness. Some of the thoughts are by no means common, and some of the turns might, from their point and ingenuity, almost suggest the word, conceit: but a passion of tenderness glows so visibly over the whole, that we think no more of premeditation than if we witnessed a paroxysm of weeping.

*The Cry of the Human* does not omit that word, without which all denunciation of man's vice and shortcoming, all lamentation over man's misery, must be pronounced aimless fury or maudlin puerility. Mere despair at the sight of sorrow, mere frenzied indignation at the sight of sin, can beseem no man, when we think Who atoned for human sin, and Who shared human suffering.

“ Then, Soul of mine,  
Look up and triumph rather —  
Lo! in the depth of God's Divine,  
The Son adjures the Father —  
Be pitiful, O God!”

*The Sleep* is one of those poems of Mrs. Browning's, in which not only the inmost thought and feeling are beautiful and simple, but in which no veil intervenes between these and general sympathy. This remark, indeed, extends, more or less, to all the pieces now under notice. In her smaller poems Mrs. Browning seemed to be working fairly clear of what must be called her mannerism. In these she stands before us in no classic adornment, clothed on with the perfect beauty of her own womanliness and truth.

“ O earth, so full of dreary noises !  
 O men, with wailing in your voices !  
 O delved gold, the wailers heap !  
 O strife, O curse, that o'er it fall !  
 God strikes a silence through you all,  
 ‘ And giveth His beloved sleep.’

His dews drop mutely on the hill,  
 His cloud above it saileth still,  
 Though on its slope men sow and reap.  
 More softly than the dew is shed,  
 Or cloud is floated overhead,  
 ‘ He giveth His beloved sleep.’

\* \* \* \* \*

And friends, dear friends,—when it shall be  
 That this low breath is gone from me,  
 And round my bier ye come to weep,  
 Let one, most loving of you all,  
 • Say, ‘ Not a tear must o'er her fall—  
 He giveth His beloved sleep.’”

The man who cannot feel this is capable of no poetic feeling at all. Had Mrs. Browning been always so simply herself, her poems might be found on every cottage shelf. And

who has more nobly told us that nature's truth is better than art's conventions, than Mrs. Browning herself? *The Dead Pan*, another poem of sustained and consummate excellence, is most of all precious, for its bold modernism, and haughty protest against the cant of classicism.

"Earth outgrows the mythic fancies  
Sung beside her in her youth:  
And those debonaire romances  
Sound but dull beside the truth.  
Phœbus' chariot-course is run.  
Look up, poets, to the sun!  
Pan, Pan is dead.

\* \* \* \*

Truth is fair: should we forego it?  
Can we sigh right for a wrong?  
God Himself is the best Poet,  
And the Real is his song.  
Sing his Truth out fair and full,  
And secure His beautiful.  
Let Pan be dead."

These words are worthy of a time of universal reaction towards reality: against all formalism and artifice; a time which has seen unveiled "the face of Cromwell, and when Ruskin is flinging open to the peoples the gallery of Art.

But it were a bootless task to attempt to refer, even in a word, to all that are peculiarly marked among Mrs. Browning's smaller poems. She touches in them a thousand chords of feeling, and glances into unnumbered spheres of thought. From deep metaphysical musings, and philosophical delineations of the characteristics of the age, to the tenderest limnings of home life, they exhibit every mood of thought and emotion. A deep tone of pathos is very constantly

present, its pervading idea being the inextricable blending of joy and sorrow in the lot of man, the necessity that there seems of all joy being *through* sorrow. The smile, the mother smile, comes on a cheek white with an "eight-day weeping," and, says the poetess,

"All smiles come in such a wise."

"Who," she asks, "can love and rest?" But neither does she ever permit the shadow to fall over *all* man's glory; she knows of a sky, pure and blue, above all plain-ing.

"Thy voice is a complaint, O crowned city,  
The blue sky covering thee like God's great pity."

This last is but an instance of a universal characteristic of Mrs. Browning's writings on which one loves to dwell. Somewhat decided language has been applied to the un-seemly familiarity with which the Divine names are used in *Aurora Leigh*. But no further qualification is necessary in asserting the pervasive Christianity of Mrs. Browning's works. Over all the domain of her poetry, over its central ranges, its quiet gardened valleys, its tinkling rills, falls a radiance of gospel light. Ever, as her music rises to its noblest cadence, it seems taken up by an angel harp: the highest tone is as the voice of spirits. It would, I cannot doubt, be to their own sincere enjoyment and real profit, if the Christian public pressed boldly into the temple of Mrs. Browning's song. She is a Christian poetess, not in the sense of appreciating, like Carlyle, the loftiness of the Christian type of character, not in the sense of adopting, like Goethe, a Christian machinery for artistic self-worship, not even in the sense of preaching, like Wordsworth, an

august but abstract morality, but in the sense of finding, like Cowper, the whole hope of humanity bound up in Christ, and taking all the children of her mind to him, that he may lay his hand on them and bless them. It is well that Mrs. Browning is a Christian. It is difficult, but possible, to bear the reflection, that many great female writers have rejected that gospel which has done more for woman than any other civilizing agency; but it is well that the greatest woman of all looks up, in faith and love, to that Eye which fell on Mary from the cross.

The greatest woman of all! This is my firm and deliberate conviction. I am, of course, not acquainted with the works of all great female writers, perhaps not even of many. But, as you look towards the brow of a towering mountain, rising far over the clouds and crowned with ancient snow, you may have an assurance, even though it rises from a plain, or, if amid lower hills, though you have not actually taken the elevation of each, that in height it is peerless. In the poems of Mrs. Browning are qualities which admit of their being compared with those of the greatest men; touches which *only* the mightiest give. With the few sovereigns of literature, the Homers, Shakspeares, Miltons, she will not rank. But in full recollection of Scott's magical versatility and bright, cheerful glow, of Byron's fervid passion and magnificent description, of Wordsworth's majesty, of Shelley's million-colored fancy, of Coleridge's occasional flights right into the sun-glare, of Bailey's marvellous exuberance, and of Tennyson's golden calm, I yet hold her worthy of being mentioned with any poet of this century. She has the breadth and versatility of a man, no sameness, no one idea, no type character: our single Shakspearean woman. In this view I am agreed with by the author of *The Ruren*, a critic of great acuteness and originality, and who

had no moral or religious prepossessions in favor of Mrs. Browning.

“Woman, sister,—” says Thomas De Quincey, “there are some things which you do not execute as well as your brother, man; no, nor ever will. Pardon me, if I doubt whether you will ever produce a great poet from your choirs, or a Mozart, or a Phidias, or a Michael Angelo, or a great philosopher, or a great scholar. By which last is meant—not one who depends simply on an infinite memory, but also on an infinite and electrical power of combination; bringing together from the four winds, like the angel of the resurrection, what else were dust from dead men’s bones, into the unity of breathing life. If you *can* create yourselves into any of these great creators, why have you not?”

Mrs. Browning has exalted her sex: this passage *was* true.

## IV.

### GLIMPSES OF RECENT BRITISH ART.

#### A DIALOGUE.

\* \* \* Englishmen of pith,  
Sixteen named Thomson and nineteen named Smith.—BYRON.

*Thomson.* Oh—Mr. Smith. How d'ye do? In that good old English salutation everything is included,—wealth, health, and family.—How are you?

*Smith.* All well. Everything in order at the old place. Crops good, boys and girls well, and wife, I will say, buxom, blithe, and debonair as you could wish an English matron.

*Thom.* And you have given all your country comforts the go-by to have a look at London?

*Smith.* Not exactly. Business brought me to town, but to-day I am free. London, you know, is on the race-course,—which it may have to itself for me,—and I have seized the opportunity for a stroll through the rooms of the Academy.

*Thom.* Indeed. This is fortunate. You know my love of Art?—I, too, had made up my mind to avail myself of the absence of fashion and dilettantism to inspect, with favoring quiet and leisure, the works of the year. Suppose we make a day of it—looking as we talk, and talking as we look?

*Smith.* Agreed — most heartily. I hold you something of an authority, whereas I know nothing of pictures, and profess no opinion on the subject. I know when I am pleased, and my pleasure is often deep. But there I stop. I have a feeling, even, that I have but a questionable right to the pleasure I experience. I am one of the common crowd, hated and shunned by connoisseurs, and despised by the artists whose pictures they buy. Like the rest I bow to the connoisseurs, and placidly receive what artists condescend to tell me. But with you I am free. Even if you were a connoisseur at all points, which you are not, the indulgence of the friend would vail the terror of the critic. I am a child, of course, but I shan't be startled at the dreadful crest; and you won't hector, will you? I give in, to begin with. I surrender all freedom of judgment, while retaining utmost freedom of impression and remark. I give you a general permission to laugh at me. You may even give me a smart touch with the whip, when I am running fairly off the road. I know nothing of pictures.

*Thom.* Hm! — All remarkably fine. Your modesty is no counterfeit — that I know; — but let me broadly declare it is a mistake. We shall perhaps contrive to raise you somewhat in your own opinion as a picture critic. In the meantime, what, pray, do you mean by “having no knowledge of painting?” You are fond of Art. You make at least an annual visit to London, to see whatever pictures the year produces. And has not your interest in Art led you to read a little on the subject?

*Smith.* Well, really, you will do me a service if you teach me to cast myself free of that timorousness with which I now think of any picture. But you must take care that a worse thing come not upon me; I should rather be a coward among critics, than a pretender among dunces.

You ask what I mean by being ignorant of painting. Well, I could not give you a single rule of perspective, or read you off one of the harmonies of color, or define tone or chiaroscuro. In one word, I am ignorant of the technical part of painting. I cannot paint, and I do not know the rules of painting. Besides,—for I shall make a clean breast of it,—I have a lurking preference for pictures that are bright, clear, clean, new; and I fancy I might give my money for a school copy with just as much heartiness as if I bore away the real master. Still worse, I have not nearly the due measure of enthusiasm for the said masters. I sigh over my want of raptures on the subject of Rubens's flesh-tint; and when I catch sight of a number of undressed ladies, even though the catalogue calls them Diana and her Nymphs, and even though it be Titian who draws aside the curtain of—of—decency—I am despicably inclined to get out of the way. In short, you must give me up.

*Thom.* Not quite yet. Nor have you told me all you have to tell. There is a positive as well as a negative side.

*Smith.* I have said nearly all that is to the purpose, I think. But you would ask what I have seen and read in connection with Art? There is a little to tell in that direction. Plain folks as we are in the Dell, I cannot pretend to a total ignorance of what is said, seen, and written in the world. There is no excuse now-a-days, even among our fern and heather, for complete ignorance. Why,—think of it. I read in the afternoon, at my tea table, the debate of last night in the House. Every rumor which circulates in the London clubs, political, literary, or artistic, finds its way to us in a few hours. I hear to-day of the arrival or production of a new painting: to-morrow I mingle with the throng inspecting it. Half a dozen libraries are ready to supply me with every new work, on Art as on every

other subject. I don't see, therefore, what right I have to be inferior in Art-knowledge to townsmen as such. I imagine that I am not so. For many years I have visited all the principal exhibitions, and have taken pleasure in penetrating, as far as I could, into the truth and meaning of the pictures. What with this, and with reading, I have formed a notion, correct or not, of the distinctive ideas which reigned in particular schools, and of the way in which subjects have been treated by particular masters. But all this is beyond the pale of technical knowledge ; all this is outside the studio ; and I have nothing to plead in arrest of the verdict of artistic barbarism.

*Thom.* Very good. But talking threatens to encroach on looking. We must get at the pictures. As you have said all you can for yourself, however, grant me just another minute to see whether I cannot allege something additional in your favor. There is a little matter which you not ungracefully omit, but which I consider of paramount importance. You know nothing, it appears, of color. You are rather hazy in chiaroscuro, and are apt to lose yourself in golden and silvery tones. You never saw, you might have added, the original Venus de Medicis, nor affected rapture over Leonardo's *Supper* at Milan. Very sad, indeed ! Now I happen to have visited you in that Dell of yours, so sweetly sinking, with its crag and copse, from the general level of the upland. I well remember a walk with you, one fresh, dewy morning, which would have been dull in town, but which in the country only made everything more rural, quiet, country-like. The sky was of course well filled with broken clouds. No other composition of the sky, if I may steal a term from Art and apply it to nature, gives at once transparency of air, pure richness of color, and fine effects of light and shade. There was a moment when the sun-

beams, which had been peeping and peering for an outlet in the clouds all morning, suddenly streamed through a valley opened for them by the gentle wind, and spread themselves in their countless companies along the faint purple of the hill. The gleam of their golden banners shone clear against the shadow which was still lying dark over the greater part of the mountain. The eyes of both of us were at once on the ridge, which had caught the light ; and when I looked at yours, shall I tell you what I saw there ? If not exactly a tear, at least a glistening which told that the heart required some kind of overflow. Nor have I forgotten that day, when, like a good, respectable Mr. Smith, you drove me to the market-town in your own gig. It was about the end of July. As we passed along, a cornfield lay by the wayside. Through it the hand of autumn had just begun to sprinkle the gold into which melts the green of summer ; and, amidst this golden-green, myriads of poppies waved their crimson flames. "These," you exclaimed, casting a glance in the direction of the poppies, "take a pretty penny out of my pocket, but for two reasons I am happy to pay the price ; first, because of the pure delight of the color, and second, because that one sight, to leave out a thousand others, and the emotion it excites, are amply sufficient to annihilate, once for all, the theory of beauty professed and defended by Francis Jeffrey."

*Smith.* Ah, let me interrupt you. Perhaps that was severe on Jeffrey. His dissertation is extremely valuable as a classification of what the beautiful is *not*. It is a monument *aere perennius*; only you must turn it upside down ! Go on.

*Thom.* Now, of whatever precise value it may be, I think I need not prove that in estimating one's capacity for judg-

ing in Art, it is at least well to know his power to observe and enjoy the beauty of nature. The instances I have adduced show that, whatever you may say of the landscapes of the former, you are not indifferent to those of the latter. Were I to pass beyond landscape, and inquire in the same way into your fitness to form an opinion on painting of human life, I should find my case still stronger. Nothing human have I ever known which did not, one way or other, interest and attract you. I have seen you look with genial curiosity on the equipages, the dresses, the languid smiles, the artificial flowers, of Hyde Park. I have seen you mark with stronger interest, and sympathy far more ardent, the glowing cheeks and glittering, twinkling eyes of the hay-makers in your own fields. I think you would know the mark of human feeling wherever you saw it, in field, in street, or on canvas. But we can put this to the proof at once. Look here. What think you of this picture?

*Smith.* It impresses and delights me: more I shall not yet venture to say.

*Thom.* But wherein consists your pleasure? What do you see in the picture? Read me off your impressions as clearly as you can.

*Smith.* I shall make the attempt. It seems to me, as I look, that there gradually dawns upon me the whole modulated beauty of a lyric poem, written not in alphabetical characters but in soft, sweet, variegated light. There is before me the well stored room, kitchen and sitting-room in one, of a homely yet substantial farmhouse. The wife of the good yeoman is seated on the left, beautiful with the beauty of joy and health, her cheek white and ruddy, her whole face bathed in the tender illumination of that smile, which prosperity never fails to light upon the countenance of a true woman. She is perfectly happy and contented in

her babe, lying there in her lap, in rosy, healthy slumber. That woman is a realization of all that is kind, vigilant, comforting, blissful, in the character and office of a mother. The yeoman's boys, stout, hearty little fellows, who spend nine tenths of their time in leaping and shouting in the fields, are seen near their mother. And what boy is that beside them? What child is it, who has glided in through the half-open door, and stands, in his thin rags, his little cap in his hand, looking up, submissively, piteously, into the face of the old grandmother? Why is he so woe-begone, so forlorn, weary-looking, beside the jocund children of the farmer? He is *The Mitherless Bairn!* Look at that babe on its mother's knee, and those boys standing beside. The blessedness of a mother's smile rests on them visibly, reddening on their cheeks, beaming in their eyes. To the right, the brood-hen has come fussing on the floor, followed by one or two chickens. Even these are cared for! But that feeble, trembling child stands alone,—homeless, uncared for, motherless. In all this, there is a felicitous truth, a telling lyrical contrast, such as I might hope for from a Burns, a Crabbe, or a Thom. And the artist has, with a wise tenderness, relieved the mere sadness of his story, by letting me know, in the softened look of the grandmother and the dewy smile of the mother, that the little stranger has this day found a home. These are my impressions of Mr. Faed's picture.

*Thom.* Exactly. And yet you pretend to be unable to form an opinion touching its merits! Is it not an extreme absurdity that people will stand by such a picture, the very tears in their eyes attesting their power of appreciation, and disclaim all right to have an opinion regarding it?

*Smith.* Ha!—I trust I have made my first step to the acquisition of that valuable human quality, conceit. But

this picture is of the simplest kind, and I suppose I must not attempt to deny that men of natural feeling and ordinary culture may appreciate pictures of that school, of which the great Wilkie and the greater Hogarth are in Britain the legitimate masters. But I should be at a loss if you asked me to criticise the quality of the painting, strictly so called, even in this picture; and I am not sure that I should not be deceived into purchasing a poor copy of it after seeing the original. What have you to say to that?

*Thom.* We shall see. But you must not imagine that I pronounce extended acquaintance with pictures of no importance, or undervalue any kind of artistic knowledge accessible to people in general. I maintain, merely, that the knowledge which is necessary to the Artist, the entire range of those subjects which relate to the producing methods of Art,—the laws of perspective, of coloring, and so on,—are foreign to the sphere both of the beholder and the critic. This truth,—which I hold to be demonstrable, we may indirectly illustrate in the course of this our dialogue,—which, by the way, will, I hope, be rambling.

*Smith.* Oh, rambling by all means. You and I, I rather think, are not the men to converse in the linear dialectics of those hard fellows who talked under the Greek plane trees. Fancy, whim, the caprice of the moment, the suggestion of a word or glance, have a place in conversation. I believe that these are not only among the most potent of the elements which make airy, vivacious, sincere, confiding talk one of the supreme pleasures, but that they cast at times such revealing side-gleams upon truth and beauty, as bring out more subtle and pointed intellectual views, and more rare and delicate lights of loveliness, than can be obtained by the elaborate method of study and composi-

tion. It has sometimes occurred to me that the best things ever uttered may have been uttered in conversation; and it is my settled conviction that the conversation of men of culture, trained in the expression of their ideas, is very nearly as accurate — even formally and grammatically — as their published writings.

*Thom.* We shall not confine ourselves, then, to any stated topic, but glance generally round the horizon of Art, tarrying a little wherever an opening into the pure blue may draw our eyes with promise. But another word just now as to this deceivability by copies, which seems to lie so heavily upon you. The danger is neither so great nor so important as you imagine. You must remember, to begin with, that the difference between high, or even the highest truth and beauty, as embodied in a work of Art, and what is commonplace, may be not only not very easily perceptible but actually slight. It may be the dewdrop, scarcely noted by the eye, yet making one rose the fairest of the garden. It may be the inscrutable somewhat, of beauty and music, which renders one poem a household term, a nation's watch-word, for ages, while another, in which you can hardly define an inferiority, is a mere fleeting popularity. It may be the nameless, indescribable expression, lending to one face a subduing and incomparable witchery, whose absence from another, with features of even higher order, leaves a countenance insipid and commonplace. The difference of a hair's-breadth in line may be that which sets Phidias and Michael Angelo at the head of sculpture: a diminution, if possible still less, in the ethereal mildness and saintly elegance of Raphael, might have cost him his throne among painters. Now I think the original may be distinguished from the copy, by bearing well in mind this last and exquisite difference, not to be defined in words. The master has

rested on his work. There is in it a patient intensity of care. Its tints blend more delicately, more elusively, than in the copy. Its lines have either the sweep or the accuracy that belonged to but one hand. An artist, familiar with the operations of drawing and painting, may have peculiar skill in detecting a certain quality of lines as lines, or of colors as colors; and here the man devoid of technical knowledge is at a disadvantage. But a master is to be distinguished by his effect as well as his means, by the result as well as the processes by which it has been attained;—a certain depth and clearness of sky, neither more nor less, a certain truth of feeling, a certain approximation to the softness and the color of a living face. And on these points, a thorough acquaintance, on the one hand with nature, and on the other with this master's power of approaching her, is all that is required in order to ability to discriminate his work from a counterfeit. All this, I need not say, is distinct from technical power of hand or eye. Your knowledge must be accurate, your practice great, but neither the knowledge nor the practice demands any acquaintance with artistic methods. Have you not found this so? Do you not, after all, believe in your liability to be deceived, more because the connoisseurs tell you that it must attach to you, than from positive experience?

*Smith.* I am bound to confess that there is some truth in your words. And, in fact, for that matter, both artists and connoisseurs fall into error on the subject of originals and copies, to all appearance about as readily as ordinary mortals.

*Thom.* Of course. What is still more, this of distinguishing between copies and originals, though made very much of, is not of the first importance, after all. Art will never be much worth as an influence on the public mind,

until we learn to respect work for its own sake, and not for the name it bears. The craftsman can never be an artist ; the copyist does not necessarily share one spark of the genius of the master : but while I have the thought, the feeling, the truth of the artist conveyed to me by a copy, I shall prize the picture, just as I should the book, which, by means of types arranged by a nameless printer, transmits to me the thoughts of a Plato or a Luther. But we are again forgetting the pictures around us. You must allow me to throw the rein right over the neck of my enthusiasm as I look upon Mr. Faed's principal work of the year,—*Highland Mary*. This is one of those pictures for which I am ready to thank and bless an artist : so deep, so delicate, so pure is the pleasure it imparts ; so beautiful and unsullied are the emotions it awakens ; so sweetly attractive, so airy, so endless the imaginings it evokes ; so thickly-crowding, so noble, so natural, the thoughts and associations it suggests. *Highland Mary* is on her way back from Ayrshire, and has already reached the mountains of native Argyllshire. She rests by the wayside. Around her are mountain flowers,—the fox-glove, the heath-bell. In the distance the view is closed in by the blue and gray of the hills. With one hand she draws closer round her her plaid of tartan. Her other rests on the little scarlet bundle in her lap. Her hair is bound by a simple blue braid, and the blue, gray, and russet of her dress combine into a pleasing harmony of color. Everything breathes a subdued but tender loveliness ; not the loveliness of Greece, not the loveliness of Italy ; not the loveliness of regal purple or queenly jewels ; but that which lurks in the sequestered dell or about heathery braes, and which peeps out here and there from the cottage and the dress of the peasant. But this is not all. There is a picture within the picture. There is a central beauty, to which

all the rest of the loveliness ministers, and up to which it leads. This is the face of the figure ; that face of Highland Mary which beams on you from the hill side, holding you with its pensive beauty, so faultless yet so Scottish. The full, ripe lips are closed in silent kindliness and love, no Paphian curve expressing the consciousness or pride of beauty. On the cheek rests the color of the mountain rose, that indivisible blending of the dawn-red and the snow-white, which is nature's highest effort in hue. The eye, soft, deep blue, looks out in maiden purity beneath the unwrinkled maiden brow. Spread over the whole face, breathing through its every feature, what thought is that which is its life and spirit ? Ah, we can guess it well ! Highland Mary is dreaming of that strange Ayrshire youth from whom she lately parted ; that swarthy youth with the glittering eye, in whose words dwelt so potent, so perilous a fascination. She thinks of Robert Burns. A thousand fancies and questions, of virgin pride, of womanly ambition, of glad, loving surmise, are whirling in summer tempest, spanned by its rainbow, through her breast. Further than this the poet-painter does not reveal : but who can hinder imagination from looking somewhat beyond, and seeing the lowly headstone in the highland churchyard, beneath which so soon were laid all the earthly hopes and loves of Highland Mary !

*Smith.* Permit me to express my decided hope that your Pegasean enthusiasm has finished its flight, and to congratulate you both on the emptiness of the rooms and the patience of your one listener. But Mr. Faed's is no doubt a beautiful picture, a work of unquestionable genius. Have you reflected on the seeming difficulty of painting a really beautiful female face ? No manifestation of beauty exercises so entrancing a power over man. The grace of the forest,

the color of the garden, the evening on the sea, the morning on the mountains,—all these possess but a feeble enchantment compared with that of the countenance of a lovely woman. I must add that the power to bring this beauty upon canvas is very rare among artists. Faed is one of the few painters who has an unerring eye for female beauty; among living painters he seems to be without an equal in this department. I trust that nothing may induce him to desert the manifest walk of his genius.

This picture pleases me, also, because it supports a little theory of mine, which, countryman as I am, has been discussed more than once at my fireside. In perception of what may be called typal loveliness, in capacity to apprehend abstract and, so to speak, geometrical beauty, particularly of the human face and form, the Greeks surpassed all nations. In the very accuracy of their perceptions here, might lie, partially at least, the cause of that restriction of their sympathy for the beautiful, which contrasts with the expansiveness of the Gothic spirit. Grant that there was a certain meagreness, a sameliness, a too scrupulous elegance, in their sense of beauty; grant that they bound the zone of Venus a little too tightly; yet I think you will find that with them lay the discovery of those essential, geometrical forms, of which all beauty in lines must be a modification. This face in Mr. Faed's picture is perfectly Scotch. The brown hair verging to golden, the cheek somewhat round and full, the general tendency to depart from the perfect oval,—these all abandon the Aphrodite model. Yet the Greek type is discernible. It is seen in the proportion and unity of the features, in the chiselling of the brow, in the delicate straightness of the nose. It is the Greek ideal of female loveliness, only not shaped from *Ægean* foam, or breathed on by *Ægean*

breezes. It grew amid the mountain heather, and its cheek was visited by the rough wind of Scotland.

*Thom.* It is unpleasant to hint an objection to such a picture, and while Mr. Faed gives us such beauty, I for one have not the heart to bid him venture on any modification of his system. But what do you think of that background?

*Smith.* The mountains are certainly generalized. I cannot say I like generalization; but you know the connoisseurs are very terrifying on that subject.

*Thom.* We must be too severe neither with Mr. Faed nor with the connoisseurs. That the background of this picture is generalized, there can be no doubt. The painter evidently concentrated his power upon his figure, and left the trees and hills in great measure to the brush. Yet the generalization is not extreme. The mountains, you observe, are by no means strictly conventional,—in form at least. They are bold and serrated, true to the general type of the Argyllshire mica schists. Mr. Faed has evidently looked on these mountains, and that with a penetrating, mindful eye. So much on his behalf. To the connoisseurs it must be conceded, that their theory of generalization, if not true, is an apology for and aim at truth,—and finds its analogue in nature. What is that theory? It is that every picture should have one central interest, idea, object; that everything ought to be subordinated to this; and that, therefore, the painter should fling in his backgrounds in broad, general, conventional masses, lest the minute perfection of their painting arrest the attention of the beholder, and diminish the power of the central idea. Now, it is unquestionably true that nature teaches and pleases by single effects, keeping in view particular objects in particular cases, to the marked, though not entire, exclusion of others. The carolling of the birds in temperate

climates, the songs of the linnet, the lark, the blackbird, are plainly intended to be delightful to man, and poets in all ages have testified to the completeness of success with which the intention has been carried out. It is equally manifest that the colors of tropical birds—the most brilliant of nature's colors, though inferior, in all qualities save brilliancy, to the color of flowers and precious stones—are intended to be a source of joy. I do not mean, of course, to assert that everything on earth is meant exclusively for man. The manifestation of his own glory and perfection is an all-sufficing end to the Creator. Yet is it true that man, in virtue of his Divine origin and relationship, has had his eye so far opened to the mystery of nature, that the mode in which he is affected by any natural phenomenon may lead him on by gentle hints to the intention of nature in the case. In the contrasted instances I have quoted, the unmistakable effect aimed at, in the one, was of sound, in the other, of color. And what I would have specially observed, is the singleness of the effect in either case. The plumage of the nightingale does not divert your attention from her note: you listen in vain for anything beyond an unmusical screech, from the bird that glances with dazzling flash through the gloom of southern forests. Look, again, to the vegetable world. Take the two great families, discriminated for Art, not for Science, of the flowers and the trees. Of all the ministers of beauty, pure and simple, flowers are the best accredited: their office in creation it is impossible to mistake. "What is the use of flowers?" This question, in its generally received implication, is one of the most foolish and ignoble which can be put. Economic use they have none. They are nature's living antithesis to economic use. They exist to be admired, looked at, loved. They are chalices of Divine workmanship, of purple, and

scarlet, and liquid gold, from which man is to drink the pure joy of beauty. But remark that the whole attention of nature is concentrated on what is specifically and exclusively the flower,—on the part that blooms into color and breathes fragrance,—in cutting its petals, and touching them with pure and perfect hues. Whether you will or no, your attention is fixed on the colored part; you think not of the rest of the plant; it furnishes merely the stalk, it finds its sole merit in supporting the flower. That a rose is intended to glorify God in its color is to me as evident a truth as that man is intended to glorify Him in worship. When we turn to the trees, there is a broad, an unmistakable difference. Through all the kingdoms of inanimate nature, trees are peerless in form. The shape of the wave is beautiful, but it is samely. The forms of the clouds are beautiful and of utmost variety, but their beauty is vast and grand, not coming quickly home to the human mind, and not unfrequently stretching into long straight lines, or losing itself in shapeless hugeness. But the forms of forest foliage have a variety, whispering of nature's infinitude; they are precisely of a size, and are precisely so placed as to render them obvious to the eye; and, in their chastened, regulated, consummate beauty, they never fail. The birch, with nodding plumes as of the forest queen, and waving tresses as of the woodland maiden; the elm, with its imperial drapery, and majestic yet graceful port, a "Queen Elizabeth" among trees; the elastic, defiant, soaring beech, its boughs seeming to leap into the sky:—these, and how many others, present the finest compositions in abstract form presented in the whole range of inanimate nature. But here again a central purpose is unmistakably traceable. There are no flowers now to draw the eye from the arching of the leaves and the grouping of the boughs;

no local intensity, no concentration of color, prevents it from resting calmly on the broad sweeps of green which robe but conceal not the majesty of the form. Among trees themselves, a manifestation of the same law of unity—or rather a thousand manifestations—may be found. The fruit tree has no fineness of form, nor is it valuable as timber; but what it wants in form and timber, it makes up in flower and fruit. Its wood is valueless compared with that of the oak, its form paltry compared with that of the elm: but no tree of the forest can boast of apple-bloom in spring, and the golden and roseate offerings of many an autumn atone for the worthlessness of the fallen trunk.

To conclude this whole matter, so far as nature is concerned,—the provinces of creation, in the illimitable variegation of their beauties, are filled with separate unities, with accomplished individual aims, not with one vast uniformity. Nature is always perfect; but perfect in her wholes; part is related to part, and the less beautiful has given the oil of its own waning lamp to kindle the greater flame of loveliness.

I should transgress all bounds if I attempted to inquire at length into the manner in which Art embodies and reflects the laws of nature. But I think we shall agree in not entertaining a doubt as to the general principle, that nature's laws of beauty reappear in human sympathy with beauty. The universal law I have noted has in all ages found its counterpart, its echo, in the universal and importunate demand made by the human instinct in every department of Art for unity. In all poetry, from the epigram to the epic, unity is indispensable. Whether in the single glimpse of thought, the momentary thrill of feeling, or in describing the ruin of planets and the procession of creations, there must always be the restraining, governing,

unifying law. The thought may be sharpened into a single epigrammatic dagger : then it must not be beaten into length or breadth, or overladen with jewelry ; and it must have no rust to dim its keen glittering, or to eat off its invisible edge. The feeling may be one pulse of emotion to dance, like a gush of summer lightning, along the veins : then it must be poured forth in one lyric swell, every word a note of music, every line a gleam of light. Or an immeasurable variety both of thought and emotion may have to be portrayed ; philosophy, religion, love, may pass and repass on the page : but here too, every episode must be governed by one central law ; and the most uncultured taste will be offended, in profound unconsciousness as to the reason why, if a single incident, a single sentiment, a single thought, is knit to the central purpose by no traceable affinity, catches no gleam of an all-suffusing light. In the case of painting it is emphatically true that there is no departure from this universal law of Art. Take the most unsophisticated man you can find ; place him before a canvas in which there is a multitude of figures, each exquisitely painted, but engaged neither in any one pursuit interesting them all, nor in a variety of pursuits coalescing in one general idea (as in a fair) ; let the soldier be seen in this corner, burnishing his arms to attack no foe, the merchant in that, erecting his booth on the sea-shore ; let there be a specimen from every order of craftsmen, each separate from all the rest and each engaged in objectless labor :— how will he be affected ? He will declare that it is a collection of pictures within a single frame, or a stupid agglomeration and no picture at all. The necessity of a single aim and interest is most obvious in the case of human subjects ; but the law holds good also in landscape. Now it is just an attempt to carry out this law of nature and of Art which has resulted in the

academic canon of generalization. Your central idea, it is argued, must be prominent, must arrest and rivet attention ; therefore, in painting your picture, all the skill you can command must, in human subjects, be devoted to your most important figure, and in landscape to your most prominent object. The argument and aim were right : of the inference from the argument, of the mode of attaining the aim, I have something to say not by any means of a complimentary nature.

*Smith.* Well, well :—this last remark is to the point. Grant that the object had in view in the accepted method of generalization is a correct one, will that avail you much in defending the connoisseurs ? Have not errors always, or almost always, lain in methods ? Have not aims generally been right ? The method of imparting unity of idea and interest to a picture, by putting in a false background, I assert to be utterly and in every way wrong,—unnatural, pernicious, preposterous. It is unnatural : for nature has attained her object in a way perfectly different, a way which may be defined in one word as, The establishment of a relation of more and less, among incidents, forms, colors, in their own excellence, and in their power over human sympathy. Thus, at the head of all interest, nature places human interest : the grandest scenery, of precipice and cloud and forest, never attracted a lover as the smile in his loved one's eye. In other provinces of creation, her most delicate form and her richest color are relieved by forms and colors which are in themselves not so exquisite or so pure. Her finish is always the same ; the rose leaf is finished as the rose petal ; but the pink and white has a natural, an inherent supremacy over the plain green. The distinction between nature's plan and that of the generalizer is exceeding broad, and of the last importance in Art ; it

has an appearance of subtlety, but it is really obvious if we give it fair and earnest consideration. The generalizers precisely evade the problem proposed and worked out by nature ; and by so doing, spread a vail between themselves and all the regions of the Beautiful. Nature gives all her forms and colors fair play ; but so *arranges* them that your eye, while gazing impartially over her prospect, is drawn by a sweet, mild, unconscious, but irresistible compulsion, to what is intrinsically noblest in form and hue. The academic generalizer finds it extremely difficult to discover the truly natural subordination of thought to thought, emotion to emotion, form to form, color to color. This demands long and searching observation and deep reflection. He cannot trust to *his* lovers for an interest greater than that of the oak under which they whisper ; he cannot trust to *his* cataract for an interest greater than the copse by its side. So he turns his oak into broad splashes of green, and his copse into broad daubs of brown. Thus his method is unnatural. It is pernicious : for, by its legalized blunder, it altogether turns away the artist from the right path of natural study. It prevents him from catching sight of nature's chief Art-secret, from learning her cunning method of unity. It accustoms him to all manner of degrading and enfeebling slovenliness. It causes him, as a true bungler, to say aloud, *this* I want you to observe, *this* mountain I specially painted, *this* rose I elaborately handled : whereas nature is always majestically silent, leading the eye to the mountain by the soft smile of its own blue, and not plucking off or misshaping her leaves that the eye may rest on her roses. Thus his method is pernicious. It is preposterous, for, when Art-culture has made the slightest progress, it certainly defeats itself. At whatever prospect we look, whether a picture or no, the eye can, at any one

moment, rest only on one point. This is a physiological law, unvarying and indisputable. In looking over a natural landscape, I am, suppose, attracted by a group of human figures. That group alone, I, for the moment, see. All other things are in a certain indistinct light around it. But I am not physically able to look long on any one point. I naturally cast my eye around. What then happens? The scene becomes definite. I discover no interference with the general aspect of nature; clouds, hills, houses, are all in their proper places and in their perfect forms. Looking upon these, my eye is rested; my attention gently relaxes; probably without any conscious emotion whatever, I turn again to the centralizing group. How is it in the picture of the academic generalizer? While the eye rests exclusively on the one portion which he has ventured to paint correctly, all may be so far well. But in a moment it wanders over the other parts of the picture. Then it is startled, disturbed, pained, by meeting an impossibility, a wild agglomeration of forms that form have none, and hues unknown to nature. It is deluded of the repose it seeks. It is not softly conducted from the pinnacle to the plain. It is called, instead, to contemplate something new in this world. The hills, the trees, the clouds, are no longer hills, trees, or clouds. The hills have permitted themselves to be pounded into dust; the trees have been mashed up for the sake of their green and brown; the clouds have kindly had themselves condensed, to yield a liquid medium for the æsthetic amalgam; and the result is a surprising and afflicting phantasmagoria, suggesting only some hideous and unprecedented convulsion in all the elements.

*Thom.* To all that I must assent. It is indeed difficult to exaggerate the pernicious influence of this theory of generalization. By rightly using the backgrounds of nature,

an incalculable accession of power might accrue to a picture. The pale moon setting beyond the white wave, lends only a deeper sadness to the human sorrow which Burns breathes through his poem. Let us really see a few sufferers clinging in despair to a wreck that tosses in mid ocean, far from any shore ; and the sun setting behind them in blood, and casting a burning glare over the cruel sea, will but enhance our feeling of the human anguish. Every aspect, phenomenon, and mood of nature takes a light from human sympathy ; “ours is the wedding garment, ours the shroud ;” the poet-painter might bring unnumbered voices of dewdrop and sunbeam, of wild wave and lightning gleam, to blend their silent but expressive accents with the main thought or emotion of his picture.

*Smith.* Talking of generalization, and of the methods of nature, what do you think of the pre-Raphaelite pictures ?

*Thom.* I am inclined to venture on the paradoxical looking answer, that there are no pre-Raphaelite pictures.

*Smith.* No pre-Raphaelite pictures ! Either argue me out of my eyesight, or explain.

*Thom.* I mean that pre-Raphaelitism has hitherto done little or nothing. I recognize the principle ; I have little faith in the men.

*Smith.* O,—and you like to be antithetic ;—well, go on.

*Thom.* I see many things in pre-Raphaelitism, but this first and best of all : a new earnestness in Art taking the right direction. I shall not separate the direction from the earnestness, because I like to believe that there was an original and causal connection between the two. An intense and lofty devotion to Art arose among certain students ; it at once sent them to nature : in nature their earnestness

found its fitting and fostering aliment. One cannot but experience a glow of sympathy with those young men of "stubborn instincts," who rebelled against the stepmother academy, and rushed to the bosom of the mighty mother herself. Seldom has a pursuit led to no great results, never has it failed to lay a giant grasp on the heart of man, when followed in the spirit which sent Holman Hunt from the luxury and adulation of a London season to take up his station with the vultures in the white blaze of a desert sun, by the wan glare of an accursed sea, merely in order that the look of lorn and lonely despair with which it lies swooning under its pestilential atmosphere, might be brought to his canvas. Such resolution and courage I shall honor, though as yet their achievement is slight.

*Smith.* Very good. But neither earnestness of application nor nobleness of devotion ensure exemption from radical error; and radical error at the commencement will turn into mockery all hopes of subsequent excellence. Bear this, if you please, in mind.

*Thom.* Don't be alarmed; grant me, also, a few minutes all to myself, even though I seem to forget the fundamental law of conversation,—that there be no engrossing. The doctrine of pre-Raphaelitism I take to be, that whatever is painted should be done as well as the artist can, and that nature is the great educator. It would not be far wrong to say that pre-Raphaelitism is a rebellion against the false theory of generalization; that, in its true interpretation, as given, for instance, in the works of Ruskin, it is a proclamation of the great Art-law of unity. Since this is the chief organic law, the *Magna Charta*, of Art, there is no dishonor, but much honor, due to pre-Raphaelitism in thus defining it. In speaking of the new school, therefore, I shall, in some sense, carry out what we have already said on the express subject of generalization.

Not contending for absolute accuracy, and bearing always in mind that there are no geometrical lines, no museum cases, in nature, we find all painters divide themselves into three broad classes. Of course they are mingled and modified in all sorts of ways, but never mind that. The first is the class of the simple narrators ; the second that of the selectors ; the third that of the inventors, the color-poets.

Painters belonging to the first of these orders engage in the mere express delineation of whatever is characteristic of the general life of their generation ; its interiors, its costume, its architecture. Such delineation must ever continue an honorable and important occupation. The human mind, striving with an earnestness proportioned to its general nobleness and capacity, to make itself at home in all centuries, must prize whatever enables it to effect, with vividness and certainty, this domestication. What would we give to have such representations of Greek and Roman, or, still more precious, of Jewish interiors, at the time, say, of the spread of Christianity, distinct and accurate as the Flemish interiors of Jan Steen and Ostade ? All portrait-painting might be claimed for this class, and if we once concede the claim, how high in honor and estimation does it rise ! If, however, the claim were exclusive, it could not on any account be acknowledged : and it is unnecessary to press it, since it is quite certain that painters simply of what is seen, in its bare actual realization, will always be popular in their own generation, and esteemed by those which follow. In the popular mind, it is probable, the love of imitation is as powerful as any of the instincts gratified in Art, and to this instinct the painters in question are the declared and perpetual ministers. Interest in the past is also undying, and on it these painters may depend for their estimation in succeed-

ing times. But it is undeniable that paintings of things as they are, indiscriminatingly taken, if belonging to Art at all, and not exclusively to artisanship, occupy the lowest rank. The reason of this is distinct and conclusive; — that the power they demand is purely mechanical, that of hand and eye, and that they afford no sphere to the free will, to the originating or altering capacity of man.

The next great class of painters, I have called the selectors. Their reliance is not placed upon any mere power of imitation, although power of imitation is indispensably necessary. What is ordinary, they pass by. They look for the rare, the exceptional, the excelling, and it they paint. I speak of their choice of whole subjects, not of their mode of securing interest in individual pictures. They select: I do not say they generalize. Academic generalization is always wrong: selection rightly performed is always right. In every landscape nature subordinates form to form, working every form perfectly out: but nature has some landscapes more beautiful than others. It is true that there is beauty in all. But this is a dangerous commonplace, and I rather imagine that those who very much use it — there are exceptions, of course — have no very delicate sense of beauty in any case. All loveliness, as presented to the human mind, influences by degree, and displays itself by contrast. The dripping, cheerless clouds, with but a few touches of livid blue breaking their monotony of ashy gray, are not so beautiful, and were not intended by nature to be thought so beautiful, as those same clouds, when the wind has gently waved them into valleys and avenues, and the bounteous sun has flung abroad upon them his varied light, here clustering into roses, there gleaming into gold. The broad, blunted features of the clodhopper, the dim, relaxed features of the sluggard, are not to be called beautiful beside the delicately

cut features, the mantling color, the radiant expression, of such a face as one may see once in a year or a lifetime. The dreary, drizzling, colorless day sets off the azure and vermillion of its evening. The heavy, ill-proportioned features, the blunt lines and torpid expression, of a thousand faces, contribute power to the one face of dazzling beauty. And in the case of beauty, as elsewhere, nature is most bountiful to him who appreciates her gifts, and who, by long, resolute, concentrated study, makes them his own. Were that vague, monotonous loveliness a characteristic of nature, man might cast on the world a heedless and wandering gaze. Its beauty would not vanish; there would be nothing to unveil, nothing to be discovered. But now the choicest natural beauties are momentary glances, evanescent as glorious; nature's smiles have to be watched and waited for; the eye must train itself to see, the mind to remember. Doubt it not, the most worthy student of nature, he who shows for the works of God the most pure and reasonable reverence, is not he who pays to the beauty of the world a general, indiscriminate admiration, but he who has listened well to nature's voice, who has learned to distinguish her degrees of beauty, who has been handed from the lichen to the daisy, from the daisy to the heather-bell, from the heather-bell to the lily, from the lily to the rose, until, passing from loveliness to loveliness, he has at last attained to such glimpses of the purest, highest beauty, as might touch the eye of an angel with rapturous fire. Here, of course, one man is originally gifted more exquisitely than another: and he who, to a peculiar sensibility to beauty, adds a rare perseverance in its culture, is the man who will excel as a painter of the second class. He is the commissioned of his fellow-men to be a spy upon nature: to visit her in her solitudes; to steal upon her at eventide

when she is shedding her faintest, tenderest purples into the mountain valleys; to mark the streaming of the light over unseen mists in the gorges of remote hills; to trace the glittering cloud edges, as they break into white fire in the glance of the lightning. If he deals with human subjects, it is his to note the manifestation of mighty and noble passion; to arrest forever the gleam of strange, flitting light which glances along the features, when a sudden throb of uncontrollable emotion strikes the heart. He goes, too, into the paths of common life, looking there for what is honorable, and lovely, and of good report. Whatever he deems worthy of choice, he paints. But he is not original save in the exercise of choice. Once give him his subject, and he paints it with literal exactness.

Whole schools of painting belong to this second class,—conspicuous among them, the Dutch and Flemish. Ruysdael and Cuyp are admirable examples. Mr. Ruskin speaks of the works of Ruysdael as furniture pictures, void of all the higher attributes of Art. Neither for Cuyp has he any great affection. Were it not that profound stupidity has no tendency to modesty, this fact might have made it impossible for *critics* of Mr. Ruskin to tell the world that all he cares for is finish, and that for its own sake. But this by the way. Be the pictures of Ruysdael and Cuyp what they may, they have been long, widely, and profoundly popular; and while adducing them as examples of their class, I would point to them also as incontestably proving our second class of painters fitted to exercise a very powerful influence upon the human mind. It seems impossible for an unsophisticated mind not to be arrested and delighted by the works of Ruysdael. Yet wherefore is it so? Wherein lies their charm? If you wandered bodily by that wood beside the moor, with the sparse sun-

beams struggling here and there through its foliage—if your eye rested on that moorland, bleak and brown, as it actually presented itself to the eye of Ruysdael, with its bit of black road, and its one pool so dead and murky—would you not hurry on, glancing carelessly at the whole scene, uninduced even by that ruin, seen by the struggling sunlight through the trees, to linger for a moment? Or if you stood by the original of this torrent, in another picture, with one or two uninteresting cottages on the hill side above, a few larches, somewhat tattered looking, on the river bank, and a broken stem or two lying across the current, would you think the scene, though perhaps deserving a look, worthy of being long and heedfully observed? Surely not. Yet here you are enthralled. If not entranced, you at least experience an intense pleasure. Why, I say, is this? Is it not because a touch of nature makes the whole world kin, and here nature is rendered in all the plainness of her truth? The slightest effort of imagination bears you away to Ruysdael's moorland, spreading bleak and brown under those sullen, lowering clouds. His earth has the very look of nature's surfaces—not glazed, not rolled out in smooth uniformity, the green all enamel, the black all jet, but rough and fretted, as nature's surface always is, with its millions of points, singly invisible, of grass-blade, reed, and heather. His clouds have the mass and depth, the light and shade, of cumulous clouds, and that look of laggard dreariness, which those clouds wear on a chill, gloomy day, threatening rain. His torrent, though it takes from the dull gray of the sky a dissatisfying bluish dimness, where you looked for bright, leaping spray, is yet true under its own sky, and you feel that those larches actually grow by that grumbling northern stream. Limited as Ruysdael's range may be, you cannot but see

that what landscapes he selected he painted, so far as bare truth was concerned, with consummate power. If you find, as I do, any fascination in the particular scenes he depicts, he will appear to you to have done no mean work.

For Cuyp, too, let me speak a word. He must, indeed, have been, in some sense, a dull man. If nature could be consulted, she would surely declare the man who could see and love but one of her aspects, who was contented to paint during his whole life one of her innumerable phases, a votary not worth having. I do not remember any picture of Cuyp's, and pictures by Cuyp are to be found in every collection, in which there was not a broad yellow light streaming from the left. Always, I think, that light touched, with a faint copper color, the tops of stately cumulous clouds, piled up, their domes towards sunset, in the repose of evening. Yet Cuyp's monotony has not deprived him of popularity, nor ought it entirely to have done so. There was a power in his dullness. He set himself to paint his one effect with unflagging assiduity; and he painted it, as it appears to me, with consummate success.

This second class of painters is the widest of any. It embraces all the men of unquestionable talent, but not high genius. I hold them in great honor. In their inability to paint more than one effect variously modified, I find an attestation of the infinitude by which the works of God excel the works of man. Their endowment is certainly beyond the common; their perseverance is indomitable; yet they spend their whole lives in attempting to trace and imitate one touch of the Divine finger! There are of course many living painters who belong to this class. Cooper, Lee, Cooke, and others without end, able, meritorious artists, are men possessing, so to speak, one piece

of knowledge. You can tell precisely what each sees in nature. Lee paints everything as if it had been "washed, just washed, in a shower." He takes his palette to the fields in the intervals of the showers that drift before the west winds of June. Green, gray, blue,—these are his colors. Cooper is as fond of yellow sunlight as Cuyp, whom, indeed, he seems to have closely studied. His cows are of the color of tortoise-shell, and you may be sure of the dreamy yellow of afternoon on his skies and streams. Cooke keeps to nearly the same color as Cooper, with the modification enforced by the nature of his marine views. A pale yellow illumination is about all his skies and clouds,—now and then, perhaps, fading into gray.

*Smith.* Allow me to interrupt you for a moment. I once happened to look at a landscape in this Academy, by which I was not a little puzzled. The sky, the clouds, the trees, were certainly the painting of Lee. But where had Lee got those yellow lights, those broad pale gleams, changing the tone of the whole picture? The cattle, on the other hand, the yellow tones here and there, were Cooper's, but how had Cooper stolen a march upon Lee, whence had he got the west wind shower to wash up his picture? A glance at the catalogue resolved the mystery. The landscape was Lee's: the cattle were Cooper's.

*Thom.* Thank you. The case is precisely in point. I have only to add, as to this class of painters, that all which has been said of them as landscapists applies to them, with obvious modification, as painters of life. Caravaggio's gamblers answer precisely to Cuyp's evenings and Cooper's cows.

There is a third class of painters, the inventors, the poets. It is an inalienable attribute of man that he can modify, recombine, adorn nature. He casts a gleam from

his crown as king of the world. To recur to Coleridge's matchless thought, he breathes over earth the music of his bridals, and compels its melodies to take a tone from his funeral wails. Raphael's Madonna did not altogether grow amid the Italian mountains. The most skilful daguerreotypist of our nineteenth century could not bring a Madonna like Raphael's from any valley of the Appenines or any plain of Italy. The angelic mildness of the eye, looking in satisfied, unchanging gaze of love and adoration on the face of that Child in her arms,—the saintliness and hallowed purity of all around the still group,—the sweet and tender loveliness of the maid-mother's face,—these were Raphael's own. And in the case of every painter among the mightiest, there is this something added, which gives its last glory to the picture. To expatiate upon this highest class of artists is needless, since its existence will be disputed in no criticism worth opposition, and its works cannot be easily mistaken.

*Smith.* Have you forgotten that this is all an introduction to your answer to my question about pre-Raphaelitism? May I ask whether the length of the reply is to be inferred from its introductory exercitation?

*Thom.* Do n't be impatient. I have not lost my reckoning. What I have been saying is not exclusively, or even strictly, an introduction; and so far as it is, be so good as to compare it to a winding avenue, that opens upon a country mansion. You take some time to thread the approach; but once you reach its end, you embrace the house in one brief glance. Now for that glance.

Apply the grand pre-Raphaelite principle, that whatever is painted should be painted as well as the painter can, in each of the provinces of Art that we have been surveying. Since I must take it for granted that the academic theory

of generalization has been demolished, it is unnecessary to inquire whether this is the only true principle for the guidance of painters of the first two classes. The question is of the third class. Does not pre-Raphaelitism of necessity cabin, crib, confine the greatest minds? Rightly understood, it does not so, by any means. Perhaps, in its most important aspect, it is an educational principle; and as such, its main value lies in *destroying* erroneous and pernicious principles of Art-education. There has been from time immemorial, in the schools of Art, a fatal confusion between two kinds or divisions of training; that which is mechanical and reducible to rules, and that which relates to things not mechanical, and which cannot be done by rule. There is a certain amount of intellectual culture, a certain attainment in intellectual excellence, which one generation can transmit to another with precisely the same ease and certainty as a method of ploughing or an improved system of rotation in crops. But there is a province in human affairs, in which teaching, whatever it may do, can never get the length of prescribing rules; in which the influence of education must be indirect and informal. This province is that of the poetic, the creative imagination, answering to that of the inventive intellect. It is specially the province of Art as distinguished from any sort of artisanship. As well appoint rules for invention in manufactures, as draw up canons by which *great* pictures may be produced. In other provinces of exertion this great principle is recognized. The fallacy which from time immemorial has covered our exhibition walls with *Deluges*, and *Lears*, and *Orpheuses*, which has kept ordinary men, age after age, attempting to puff themselves into genius, has never drawn breath in healthier atmospheres, where no dilettantism turned aside the searching but salubrious

influence of the popular gale. The human mind has always, in the might of its unsophisticated instincts, spurned the idea of a *poem* written by rule. Fancy a lyric constructed upon scientific principles! Fancy a lark instructed out of Whewell how to flap his wings, or a nightingale conning the theory of music! Might not an epic be put together in an age when-mechanical invention has got so far? "For your tempest, take Eurus, Zephyr, Auster, and Boreas, and cast them together in one verse; add to them, of rain, lightning, and thunder (the loudest you can), *quantum sufficit*. Mix your clouds and billows well together till they foam, and thicken your description here and there with a quicksand. Brew your tempest well in your head, before you set it a blowing. For a battle, pick a large quantity of images and descriptions from Homer's Iliad, with a spice or two of Virgil, and if there remain any overplus, you may lay them by for a skirmish. Season it well with similes, and it will make an excellent battle." You remember Swift's exquisite humor. And will not all men laugh with him at the absurdity involved in this "Recipe for an Epic?" But Art has ever yet been the possession of comparatively a few; and in painting, it is quite possible, by adherence to certain rules, of composition in form, and harmony in color, to produce pictures pleasing the eye and satisfying a mediocre taste. Hence your regular crop of mock sublimities from year to year: hence the oversight of that axiom of all Art-criticism and Art-education, that the distinguishing character and very essence of genius lies in the impossibility of attaining its results by rule, in the vanity of all attempts to steal its celestial fire and set it to burn in the cast-iron grates of mediocrity. The word, "conventionality," is very much in use at present, and I have no doubt that very little meaning is

in many cases attached to it: but I consider all conventionality, so far as it is evil, to consist simply in the accumulation of methods by which genius may be mimicked. Now true pre-Raphaelitism—the pre-Raphaelitism of Ruskin—appeals from the hoary conventionalism of Art-teaching to nature, declares that rules can never produce great pictures, and maintains that the one infallible method of securing sound work—plain, valuable artisanship if the worker is but an artisan, the invaluable fruits of genius if he is a born artist—is to hold to nature, and paint what is seen. Is not this a principle, “which to look at is to love?”

*Smith.* True, true; but do you not at least imply an oversight of part of the truth? Can you dissociate past effort from present study? Will you assert that I can derive no benefit from knowing how my fellow-men of past generations looked on the face of nature? Will you pronounce *present* knowledge of natural phenomena, *present* discovery of more excellent Art-methods, of the highest importance, yet tacitly affirm that neither fact nor principle can be so assuredly ascertained, as to be transmitted to posterity? Nature, with all her demand for labor, has a grand motherly habit of thrift, by which she encourages, rewards, dignifies toil. Newton sets his foot easily, for a second ascent, upon the principle, to discover which was a long and painful task for Archimedes. Watt does not re-invent steam before he invents the steam engine. Can you wholly exclude this law from the province of Art?

*Thom.* By no means; and allow me to say that I think I have already said enough to indicate how far and in what sense it is either admitted or excluded. No sort of Art-education, pre-Raphaelite or other, can confer the creative capacity of genius: Archimedes did not tell Newton *how*

he had discovered; Milton, schoolmaster as he was, could teach no pupil to write a *Paradise Lost*. But this prevents not that a thousand ordinary mathematicians, between Archimedes and Newton, apply to useful purposes the discoveries of the former. Now it is impossible wholly to dissever Art from mere workmanship; the pure spirit must dwell in a temple of clay: and the greatest genius, if he had to paint a house or a man, would act absurdly by attempting to re-invent all his processes and rules. Only, if his province is that of real Art, he can breathe the new life into the old form, and to do that no rules will avail him.

*Smith.* Well: but will study of nature enable him to do this either?

*Thom.* You think that a clincher. I answer without any hesitation, No. By learning accurately to paint all the earth and all the sky, a man would learn to produce painted landscapes capable of affording great pleasure and information to his fellow-men; but he would never necessarily learn to produce a work of Art. I might find it difficult to establish this proposition, but for the stores of instance afforded me by the history of painting. With these I can have no difficulty. The Dutch painters have shown the world what workmanship can attain without genius. The daguerreotype has shown it still better. These give nature, but not the poetry of nature. Turner's *Temple of Minerva Sunias* gives nature and the poetry of nature also; it is a work of Art. By study of the works of bygone artists, encouragement, suggestion, awakening, may be found for genius; therefore such study is good: only it must be remembered that nature is the great check upon human influence, that she furnishes the test of accepted truth, and is the source of every truth that is new.

*Smith.* Now what would you say if I pronounced you at your conclusion a little further off than you were at your commencement? You seem to have left very little of distinctive character to your pre-Raphaelitism.

*Thom.* Why, if you so pronounced, I should simply say you are not so shrewd a man as I take you for. You are very well aware that the two things invariably and essentially opposed to truth are novelty and paradox. Ruskin and the pre-Raphaelites cannot be accused of having propounded any new-fangled, unheard of idea. They proclaim an ancient and substantial truth; and it is as representing and promoting a reaction towards this truth, that they can claim a position of their own. A conventionalism, piled fold after fold for centuries, had stiffened and benumbed the limbs of Art. This fact must be borne in mind in contemplating the whole phenomenon of pre-Raphaelitism. Had not Mr. Ruskin opened the eyes of all who will see to its certainty, the fact of established conventionalism might take long to prove. But it is now preposterous to call it in question. Surely, surely, in all reason and honesty, it must be admitted that the old traditions and admirations retarded Art, lowered and deadened the general sense of artistic truth, produced pictures without number whose greatness was a sham, and evoked applause without end which was an hypocrisy. The Clades, the Salvators, the Poussins sat on their hero-thrones, their sceptres, whether leaden or golden, stretched out to protect placid absurdities, with their scholars, surrounded by all their ghastly paraphernalia of extinct classicism, manufacturing "great" pictures at their feet. Only conceive the power of that moral and intellectual narcotic, through which men came not only to tolerate but to praise those landscapes, for instance, which the said masters called after Scripture subjects? The

picture was called *The Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca*, *The Sacrifice of Isaac*, *The Departure of the Queen of Sheba to visit Solomon*, or by some such name. The painter put in his modern villas, harbors, and trees, and when he had finished, you had to search the picture over and over, until you lighted on a miserable figure or two in a corner, in some trivial or despicable attitude, representing the artist's conception of some one or other of the most solemn and interesting incidents in human story. I have seen a picture by Salvator Rosa called *Paul preaching in the Wilderness*. The apostle has precisely the look of a vulgar, crusty, petulant monk, and he points to a couple of crossed sticks in his hand, representing a rude cross. The scene is a rocky gorge after the manner of Salvator, and such as might have existed in the country of the Galatians. Imagine Paul addressing those same Galatians with a cross in his hand by way of illustrating his doctrine! Read his letter to those mountaineers, and inquire into the truth, say rather the complicated, outrageous falsehood, of Salvator's picture. Now I do not of course blame the painters for such things as these. The civilization of their time admitted and encouraged such falsities. Nor do I forget that there are abstract qualities of hue and line. But was there not need for a reaction, when men, on the intellectual level of the nineteenth century, were told to take such men as infallible models, and when imitations of their manner were set apart in a specially great school? The Art of Great Britain is passing through a transition period. It experienced of old, more or less, the paralyzing effect of an excessive conventionalism. The truth and beauty which former masters had perceived and exhibited was not estimated in itself or valued for its own sake. Instead of this, the reverence for authority, for men, for names, entered in.

Painting surrendered its freedom and its originality in a species of hero-worship. But Ruskin and the pre-Raphaelites sent artists back to the fountains of nature. They proclaimed again that all truly great, all nobly ideal Art must arise out of the real; that over the gaunt skeleton of material fact must the elastic muscle, the trembling nerve, the vital blood, the mantling bloom, of artistic creation lie. Re-invigorated by converse with nature, Art may again turn to the old masters; not now to worship, but to examine, to see, to know, to admire, to learn. It will watch the first efforts of Cimabue, the dawning glory of Giotto, the softened splendor, surely a noonday splendor, of Raphael. It will mark Claude as he "sets the sun in heaven," and follow to the fields the hardy workers of Holland. It will watch the hand of every great and honest man who ever painted.

It can hardly be conceived that the simultaneous appearance of Ruskinism, pre-Raphaelitism, and photography is not destined to yield some great result. That simultaneousness may reverently be held to have been providential. All three send Art in the same direction,—to nature. Photography is gradually becoming perfect in the rendering, not only of faces, trees, and buildings, but of the great forms of landscape. The eye finds so much delight in color, that it is not in the least surprising that the brown and white of large photographs should not be generally admired or liked, or that they should be unable at first to enter the lists of popularity against pictures. But as the eye accustoms itself to dispense with the charm of color, and learns to dwell on the abstract forms revealed by the photographer, the beholder experiences a profound delight. I have been myself positively surprised at the increasing sense of beauty, grandeur, majesty, with which I have looked upon Alpine

photographs. The silent, stable masses, resting in their colossal strength on the foundations of the world,—the faint, diffused shade, drawing me on into the depths of solemn valleys,—the rich variety of the pine foliage on the lower reaches of the hills;—these have come by degrees to afford me an exquisite pleasure. This is nature in her own majesty. She is disrobed of the mantle of Art; and methinks it is hardly flattering to one's human pride to find how well the human drapery can be dispensed with. It may be that the universal presence, in prints and pictures, of *some* added element—whether the imperfection of incompetency, the mistake of conventionalism, or, if you will, the poetry of genius—gives a special zest to representations in which this is wanting. It may even be that the literal forms of nature have in themselves an august beauty which man has as yet, generally speaking, failed not only to improve but to equal. But however it is, I confess I find more nourishment for eye and soul, in a few good photographs of Swiss scenery, than in a similar number of prints or pictures. Depend upon it, as the public eye becomes, by means of pre-Raphaelite paintings, of photographic views, and, let me add, of modern facilities in beholding the hills and rivers of nature, accustomed to fact, the craving for more truth in the works of artists will become too general and too intense to be resisted. The old ideal of landscape will be unable to maintain itself. It must either pass away or learn to embody all the fresh knowledge of the time. That there is a possibility of this being done, even of a grandeur being added to all that nature can display, I have no doubt whatever. A future of unexampled glory *may* await Art.

*Smith.* Let me add a word as to the dangers to which pre-Raphaelitism is peculiarly exposed. Of the mistake of

offering or accepting correct studies as pictures, and of that of drawing not only feature but expression from models, I cannot speak. These have simply to be mentioned, as indefensible and fatal. But there is a subtler and more comprehensive error than these, of which pre-Raphaelites would do well to beware. I mean the error of dishonoring the creative imagination, confounding it with a mere combination of accuracy of memory and power of eye and hand. Memory and imagination are essentially distinct. The one is indeed the handmaid of the other, the serviceable, the indispensable handmaid ; but the handmaid cannot change places with the mistress. Memory brings the materials and lays them out ; it may be in systematic arrangement, it may be in chaotic disorder ; imagination looks upon them, and they are grouped into unity or spring to life. Mere mechanical order becomes living harmony, and disorder subsides into a world. All those lights of natural beauty, all those truths of symmetry and form, which the Greek imagination embodied in Aphrodite, could be catalogued and counted over by memory. The bend of the sea-wave, the white foam, mantling, in the sunlight, into rose-bloom, the laughing light that danced in a thousand smiles over the broad front of ocean, might all have been chronicled and remembered, yet remained forever dead and apart. But imagination comes upon the scene. Lo ! the bending wave is a moving arm ; the snow of the foam and the tints of its rainbows blend in a living cheek ; the many-twinkling laughter of the sea is gathered into the witching eye of Aphrodite. Take another example. A most powerful and touching description could be drawn out in detail of the horrors of popular commotion, of anarchic revolution. The poverty occasioned by the obstruction of steady industry might be depicted ; the number of the slain might

be specified, and the miserable manner of their death described; the destruction of ancient dynasties, the conflagration of opulent cities, the blackening of fertile provinces, might be dwelt on in all the ghastliness of their coloring and all the minuteness of their detail. In all this, memory alone might have been at work. A totally different faculty is in operation when Coleridge annihilates, by one stroke of consummate perfection, all descriptions of popular madness, in these brief words:—

“Lo! the giant Frenzy,  
Uprooting empires with his whirlwind arm,  
Mocketh high heaven.”

To say how, precisely, this faculty works is what no critic ought to attempt, and what he who possesses it most might be of all least able to do. But as to its radical difference from memory, no question can be entertained. Pre-Raphaelitism, rightly understood, does not endanger the distinction. By recognizing it in all its force, Mr. Ruskin has both exhibited to those willing or able—which you like—to follow him, the completeness and symmetry of his system, and set whole nests of hornet-critics, whose characteristic is that they can fasten upon but one point at once, buzzing about his ears. He hailed pre-Raphaelitism as mighty, because it accompanied with truth; he gazed wondering upon the imaginative “dream,” as it bodied itself out under the pencil of Turner. “Why,” buzzed the hornets, “this man, this Turner, is among the mists on the mountain’s brow; these pre-Raphaelites have stuck their palettes among the weeds at its foot, and paint as with microscopes: how can any one pretend to admire and approve of both?” Ruskin, with the eye of true critical genius, embraced the whole mountain from brow to base. Turner he saw far

up among the mists, which turned to glory round him: between his station and that of the pre-Raphaelites lay many a wreath of cloud, hiding the pathway up: but on the same pathway were both,—the pathway of loving submission to nature, of earnest devotion to truth. Pre-Raphaelitism is the surest path—though, recollect, no path can be guaranteed—to the capacities and achievements of creative genius; and whatever it positively ensures, it has the grand negative advantage of producing no utterly abortive work. When, therefore, I look to the works of Ruskin and consider his estimate of Turner, I fear no misconception of pre-Raphaelitism. But it is not equally so, when I look at the works of Millais and recollect Ruskin's estimate of them. I should be sorry to say anything implying disrespect for the powers of Mr. Millais. However much certain of his works may fall short or offend, the man who has looked upon nature with his earnestness is deserving of honor. No man but one very peculiarly gifted could have given so mighty a realization of the deep, dark amethyst of the autumn hill, as Millais has given in his *Autumn Leaves*. But with all his realizing power, I cannot believe that this artist has any real imaginative force. You may test the fact simply but infallibly. Attempt to take his pictures to pieces. Endeavor to trace the process of their composition. To do so in the case of imaginative genius may be pronounced impossible. The touch there is invisible as the conception was instantaneous. The mode of working is subtle as life. Coleridge could not have told you how that giant sprung to life in his soul. A mechanical mind, considering characteristics and adopting traits for a century, could not have produced the impersonation. But whenever Millais attempts imaginative work, he lets his hand be seen. You know how

idea after idea struck him, and was taken up, and fitted to its place, and put in. In his large picture, *Peace Concluded*, for instance, who cannot perceive that triviality after triviality, about the cock, the bear, the turkey, the lion, suggested itself to his mind, and was mechanically suited to his purpose? You can put the colons and full stops into the long-winded pointless tale. Mr. Ruskin may continue to admire Millais, but he will never persuade more than a coterie that his favorite possesses a fine sympathy or a high imagination. It would be a dreary consummation if pre-Raphaelitism, afre toiling long in the mines of truth, laid its stores, not at the foot of some wizard imagination, capable of evoking perfections of loveliness undreamed of in the world, but before mere memory, gigantic indeed in its powers, but mechanical and manufacturing after all.

*Thom.* Whether Millais has true imagination or no, he has produced one great picture. *The Rescue* appears to me by far his finest painting as yet,—there are one or two of his, by the way, that I have not seen. *The Autumn Leaves* gives perhaps greater promise, but the children in it are so intolerably ugly, and their gestures so strained and artificial, that the picture seems to me destroyed. *The Rescue* pointedly exhibits the possibility of mere faithful rendering of nature yielding noble pictures. Learn to depict her faithfully, and when you come upon her in a grand mood, you produce a grand picture. The story of *The Rescue* is simple. A fireman brings three children in safety from a burning house. The mother awaits him, kneeling at the foot of the stair. One of the children she receives from his hands; the two others still cling to him. He stands upon the creaking staircase, in the full red blaze reflected from the conflagration. The figure of the mother has generally been regarded as the principal one in the

picture; but, in spite of the depth of tenderness, mingled with love and gratitude, in the expression of her face, I cannot say that it fully satisfies me. The fireman is certainly good: resolute, manly, strong as iron, like one accustomed to pass through the fire. But the central figure in the picture, its climax, if I may so speak, is the boy on the fireman's shoulder. That child's eye is the grandest thing Millais ever did. The little fellow has just been snatched from a fearful death, and the fierce flame yet glares on him its burning crimson. But it is not terror that reigns in his face. He does not, like the younger children, stretch and shriek towards his mother. That mighty glare has caught him, not with its terror but with its sublimity. He gazes on it, in awe and wonder, fascinated by its maddened beauty. The soul of the man, with all its regal supremacy over nature, is in his lit eye; that supremacy, in virtue of which man can abstract every phenomenon from its effects, and behold it in itself; causing the tempest to play before him like a beautiful wild beast, and gazing into the eye of the lightning until he has mastered the secret of its beauty. The younger children will forget the whole incident in a few months or years: but when that boy's eye is dim, and the snows of eighty years are gathering over that fair brow, his grand-children will learn from his lips, in minute detail, every circumstance and every aspect of that tremendous fire. If there is nothing but realism in this picture of Mr. Millais, it is realism of a very valuable sort.

But let us now bid farewell to the pre-Raphaelites. There are one or two young men, who work upon principles closely allied to those of the brotherhood,—if not, indeed, identical with these,—but whose genius seems to me, in certain important respects, higher, and whose

pictures are totally free of crudity, affectation, or singularity. At the head of these, I set the young Scotch painter, Noel Paton. Very high in their ranks are Mr. Wallis and Mr. J. C. Hook. The two former paint with an accuracy and universality strictly pre-Raphaelite; but their sense of beauty is so exquisite that when you behold its results you feel constrained to ask whether Mr. Millais has a special sense of ugliness. If the old theory of generalization receives a support it by no means merits, from the frequent lack of power, among the pre-Raphaelites expressly so called, to impart to their pictures any centralizing interest, it is irrecoverably overthrown by the absolute and uniform finish, combined with perfect unity, of Paton and Wallis. *Home* by Paton is the chief poem-picture called forth by the Russian war. It has the beauty of truth, that beauty which, when reached, seems so plain, obvious, easy of attainment, but which, even in so simple a case as this, demands, if not strict imaginative intuition, yet so rare a variety and harmony of powers, so delicately yet accurately attuned a sympathy with human emotion, so true a sense of pathos, so exquisite a capacity for perceiving the line, invisible to a thousand eyes, which marks off, on all sides, the tender, the graceful, the beautiful, from everything coarse, forced, or glaring, that it is difficult to name it otherwise than with the name of genius. The soldier has arrived in the heat of the day, wounded, weary, footsore, has walked into his little cottage, and sunk on a chair. His wife had been sitting beside the cradle of her child, engaged partly in sewing, partly in inspecting certain letters, preserved in that casket, the most precious, doubt it not, in the dwelling, which stands upon the table. She had been musing once more upon him who was away, her eye now filling in anxious solicitude, now brightening

in delicious hope, now resting in connubial joy and pride on the letter in her hand ;— and he was far away. Then, suddenly, he entered and sank upon the chair. She spake not a word, but, kneeling down, laid her head on his breast and strained him to her heart of hearts. His mother meanwhile, resigning him to his wife, had drooped her head over his chair, her face unseen, but the tears falling. The soldier gazed downward on the face of his wife, in a silent rapture of manly tenderness, of perfect love. Such was the story the painter chose to tell, and this the moment which, as the most impressive, he fixed upon to reveal the whole. Every heart acknowledges his power.

*Smith.* Is not the expression on the face of the wife too negative, too sleep-like ? You do not see any emotion through her eyclids, though she has closed them over balls throbbing like fire.

*Thom.* I agree with you. I think that, in any case of emotion so powerful, the face would needs show more vivid trace of it. But I have heard it maintained that the slumbering look of the face is accurately true, expressive of a feeling which is satisfied, which no longer goes outward, but gathers itself up in the heart. Perhaps this is the more delicately penetrative criticism, but I cannot repel a suspicion that Mr. Paton told his lay figure to close her eyes, and forgot himself into painting what he saw. Millais in the same way painted a girl with her eyes shut for a blind girl, giving that equable radiance of expression over the whole face which belongs only to the entire complement of the senses, and of course not painting a blind girl at all. This is one of the minor dangers of pre-Raphaelitism, but one into which such painters ought surely not to have fallen.

You have seen Paton's *Quarrel and Reconciliation* of Oberon and Titania from *Midsummer Night's Dream*?

*Smith.* Yes. They are characterized by great spirit and vivacity, delightful in fancy, masterly in execution, but not comparable for a moment with the bit of real life at which we have been looking. He has on one occasion failed,—ambitiously, powerfully, as only a strong man fails, yet indubitably. His far-famed picture, *The Pursuit of Pleasure*, is a failure. The subject was one of surpassing difficulty, to be successfully treated only by the highest imaginative energy, and it does not perceptibly detract from the promise of a young artist that it baffled him. The idea on which the picture is founded is the commonplace, that all men follow after pleasure, each seeking it in some particular manner, and each finding it a delusion. The triteness of the thought did not in the least affect the possibility of original treatment. It is a commonplace truth that war is replete with horrors and that peace brings joy and plenty; but the picture by Rubens, in which this truth is embodied, is by no means commonplace. Treatment will redeem any subject. But Mr. Paton's treatment is irredeemably bad. In the immediate foreground you behold a motley group of pleasure seekers,—the warrior, the miser, the rake, and so on, women mingling in the throng. Each of these, let it be granted, is finely conceived and painted. Before the group, there floats in the air, life-size or nearly so, rich in color, and with a leering expression, a golden-haired female figure, almost entirely nude. Lured by her witching smile, that motley group follows on heedless towards dark spaces of ocean. Over the whole, afar in the sky, is seen the Shadow of Death, cloud-like and ghastly,—a powerful thought, suggested, I should think, perhaps unconsciously, by the

genius of David Scott. Omitting all consideration of detail, the question as to whether the picture is a failure or not resolves itself into this other, Has the painter succeeded in bodying forth the unity in variety, and the variety in unity, of the universal pursuit of pleasure? Has he, on his canvas, given local habitation and name to that mystic something, which allures all yet seems different to each? To this question I answer, He has not. To ninety-nine out of every hundred, for one thing, his figure of pleasure would suggest only sensual pleasure; and the power of that figure to allure the gambler and miser would be simply a negation or a puzzle. But even this fact is not necessary to my case. Be it that sensual pleasure is not solely indicated by the alluring maiden. If *any* characteristic can be named, in virtue of which her influence upon her followers can vary in each case, the painter has, I acknowledge, attained his end. But after the most candid and careful exercise of judgment, I cannot discover any kind of varying identity in the figure; and I am absolutely satisfied that none such exists. Therefore the painting is an explicit failure.

*Thom.* How could the idea have been better embodied?

*Smith.* You are very well aware that such a question, if intended to invalidate an adverse criticism, is weak and futile. The critic does not profess to be a painter or a poet; the question he has first of all to discuss is how the thing is done, not wherefore the artist has failed in doing it. But I do not scruple to assert that, in the present instance, certain sources of suggestion are patent to all, by duly availing ourselves of which, we may secure one or two important hints as to how Mr. Paton might have modified his treatment. The idea is one which has been

from the earliest times familiar to the intellect and imagination of the race. Poetry has variously shadowed it forth. How did the ancients represent it? I cannot but wonder that Mr. Paton did not find a suggestion in the marvellously true yet marvellously beautiful myth of the Syrens. The sisters sat at the mouth of their sea-side cave, half hidden in its twilight shade, clearly discernible by the eye of no traveller. There they sung their witching song. It was heard on the ocean by the voyager, mingling its deep tone with the waves, mystic, indefinable, irresistible. To every listener, that music told a different tale. The lover heard in it the voice of his mistress. To the warrior, it was the promise of glory and fame. To the miser, it brought visions of treasures untold. To all it came with irresistible potency. Turning at once to our own times, do we not naturally picture to ourselves the allurement of fancied joy in some vague, half-defined manner, the enchantment of distance, the shadows of mystery, entering into the conception? "The curtain of existence," says Carlyle, speaking of Burns, "was slowly rising before him in many-colored splendor and gloom." Do not the words superbly express the idea generally formed of those wavering, varying tints, which lure every one on in the name of happiness? Or are we not apt to think of promised joy as a vague illumination on the horizon, seeming to grow on the sight, yet ever receding, ever disappointing? Or, once more, is not pleasure thought of as a rainbow, followed by children, never yet caught by any child? In one word, *indefiniteness* is the never-failing characteristic of all attempts naturally made to represent the attraction of pleasure. Had we caught sight, dimly through veiling clouds and in the distance, of some fair maiden, striking a harp; or had some indistinct, mysterious illumination been seen

gleaming over the further waves; we could have sympathized with each figure in Mr. Paton's eager group. But his Syren has come to look us in the face, and by so doing her spell has been forever broken.

*Thom.* The public sentiment coincided with your view of *The Pursuit of Pleasure*. I earnestly hope, for the sake both of Mr. Paton and his country, that he will not learn to despise public opinion on such matters. His *Home* has awakened no feeling of disappointment in the multitude, who, be assured, differ from connoisseurs in this, as much as in other things, that they like better to praise than to censure. If, moreover, they are not apt to censure, still less likely are they to fawn or flatter, which a coterie of friends and of friendly connoisseurs always do. Were I a poet or painter, I might not wish for new imagination, melodiousness, or success: but I should wish and pray that I might not fall under the enervating, the humiliating influence of a circle of blinded admirers. The poet or painter who knows the grand secret that man's honor and blessedness here below consist not in being praised for his powers but in getting that work out of them, to the utmost, which God has fitted them to perform, will desire to go out, as far as is possible, a mere voice or presence, into the wide atmosphere of the world, with its bracing winds, its ready thunders, and its benignant glory of calm.

*Smith.* As I have spoken of what, as an express and demonstrable failure, may be pronounced with some confidence one of Mr. Paton's worst pictures, I shall now turn to what may with equal confidence be pronounced his best. The picture to which I refer might be variously named. A lady has just expired. A watcher bends over that face from which the majesty of death has not yet obliterated the smile of womanly farewell. The corpse lies by an open

easement, and, beyond, is the saintly calm of a summer night. From the dim mountain-horizon streams upwards silently towards the zenith, that suffusion of fair, faint radiance, which is, through the whole summer night, a prophecy of summer dawn. Never painter, one had almost said never poet, blended so many great silences into one ecstacy of repose. Night, death, and sorrow make up the awful calm. A star twinkling in that sky would break the perfect rest. The moon must not walk in brightness there. That veil of faint dawn-radiance shuts out the gaze of moon and stars, and only the eyes of human love look on the face of the dead. The lamp has gone out in the chamber; its last pale smoke-wreath curls gently upward in the still air.—I shall not say of the painter of such a picture that there is nothing in the highest province of poetic painting which he may not attempt; it were a superfluous remark in reference to a man who has already produced a masterpiece in the very highest department of Art. No theme is more august or sublime than that of death. Around it gathers all that is darkest in human woe, and brightest in human hope. It is a cipher of the mystery of human existence. And Mr. Paton has spread over it the solemnity of night, and touched it with the glory of dawn, falling on it from afar. In the bowed form of the watcher beside the pale corpse, we see that human weakness which faints under the mighty shadow; but yonder radiance reminds us of a victory beyond death, of the breaking of a resurrection morn, of the angels now welcoming the human spirit which has fled.

*Thom.* To offer advice to a painter like Mr. Paton, to declare dogmatically in what province he may best exercise his genius, would be presumptuous. But one may be pardoned for saying how, with his own bounded means of

judging, he would *like* to see Mr. Paton exerting his powers. It seems, then, to me, that he might find a peculiarly suitable sphere in certain departments of religious painting. The highest note of a man's fame is not generally struck until he has himself passed away. It is in the far distance that the great mind "orbs into the perfect star." It would probably be thought incomparably absurd to name the genius of Paton along with that of Raphael. Yet I cannot but feel that, allowing for any difference in degree, the powers of the former are in some sense akin to those of the latter. I am strongly impressed with the conviction, that no living painter is so well qualified as Paton to realize for us, if human skill can in any measure realize, those moments in the history of our Saviour, when the mildness, the tenderness, the sorrow, of the human hearts and faces round him, were so touched and irradiated by his presence, that the whole scene seems to appertain to some region, if not all of heaven, yet surely not solely of earth. If any man could paint for us the eyes of Mary, "homes of silent prayer," resting on Him who had called Lazarus from the grave, I think it could be done by Mr. Paton. If any man could bring to canvas even a faint suggestion of that Divine tenderness, with which the dying Lord committed his earthly mother to the care of John, I believe it would be he. Only I am by no means prepared to maintain that such subjects could possibly be so treated in painting as not to disturb and degrade the ideal of them which dwells in the imagination of the devout Christian.

*Smith.* I also might be well pleased to see Paton taking the shoes from his feet and entering such holy ground. Meantime it is well that his genius frequents such lowly paths, as, while leading, perhaps best of all, to the highest ideal, secure his mind perfectly from extravagance and

affectation. Let him paint such pure and perfect color-lyrics as *Home*, let him breathe into simple joys and sorrows, over peasant faces and into cottage interiors, the immortality of beauty, and not only will he touch chords to which the heart of humanity must vibrate, but will find for his own genius a wholesome and precious aliment.

*Thom.* Have you remarked how completely Paton's paintings refute that old generalization theory? Is there a generalized hair's-breadth in his picture of Death and Night? Is not the casement painted to its last stone? Has not the brush lingered on each filament in that faint, dying wreath of lamp-smoke? Yet has not the artist proved himself capable of dispensing with the base ministry of imperfection and slovenliness? Have not, on the contrary, all the details of the picture been compelled to do service and homage to that mighty thought, to that mastering emotion, which his genius set in its central and undisputed throne? Perfect unity and perfect finish.

*Smith.* If that miserable fallacy required one other death-blow, it would receive it in this picture by Mr. Wallis — who stands, I suppose, next to Paton among those who act on the pre-Raphaelite principle, without falling into the pre-Raphaelite grotesqueness, mawkishness, or affectation. *The Death of Chatterton* is a subject worthy of the highest ambition, and requiring commanding powers. Mr. Wallis has attempted it and not failed. Chatterton lies before us on his humble truckle-bed, in his squalid garret. The first glimpse of dawn sheds a drear and slumbrous light, of faint cowslip-yellow and fainter rose, over the distant dome of St. Paul's. The window is half open, and on the sill is one rose-bush. A rose, a solitary one, had burst suddenly into full bloom, but then broke its slender stalk, and now hangs its head, the petals fall-

ing one by one. Chatterton lies on the bed, his full auburn locks falling over the coverlid, his relaxed arm holding the phial drooped to the floor, his face pale and rigid in death. His form and posture express simply the awfulness, the silence, the might of death. There is in the face no triumph over the last enemy; nor is there lingering anguish as of the final conflict; nor do fear and horror cast their shadow over it. It is the calm surrender of despair: "Death, thou hast conquered!"

*Thom.* Mr. Wallis has produced a noble picture; deserving, it may be, of Mr. Ruskin's expression of applause, "faultless and marvellous."<sup>1</sup> But there was one thing which transcended even this picture, indubitably, immeasurably transcended it;—the bare fact itself. There is in the work of Art before us a certain beauty on which the eye can rest with pleasure. Part of the dress of Chatterton is of a rich, lovely purple; and other touches of color about the picture complete the sweet harmony of which this is the central chord. Mr. Wallis has permitted himself a certain idealizing license; he has paid a modicum of deference to the taste of the public, to the delicacy of fastidious eyes. But when death smiled from beneath his grisly crown upon the dead Chatterton, there was no dallying with cultured sensibilities, no tender refinement of idealization. The boy staggered upstairs that evening, haggard, squalid, hunger-stricken. Had Mr. Wallis dared to give the rugged fact, we should have seen those cheeks sunken and livid, that flesh clinging to the bones with the clasp of starvation. In all England, that evening, there was no boy of seventeen dowered with faculties so princely as those of Chatterton. And he knew it! Yes: that was the most searching element in his agony. His critical capacity was developed as fully as his poetical. He knew not only his right to

literary distinction, but his power, if he were but once known, infallibly to secure it. He longed, he yearned, to live. But a week or two before, he had written a boastful letter to his mother and sister, full of hope and courage. He had sent them also a few cheap presents, confident that they would be followed by others of a very different sort. But hunger overtook him: sheer starvation dug a grave before his eyes. He did not need much. One loaf per week, bought stale that it might last the longer, was, with water, all he needed. But that was denied him. So, in the strength of despair and madness, he ended his torment, preferring instant rest within the jaws of darkness, to that agonized flutter by which he strove vainly to resist the deadly fascination. No soft, sweet colors met the eyes that first looked upon him next morning; only threadbare ghastliness and squalor. Death, that night, was in his coarsest mood, and had arranged no picturesque effects. Read the simple detail of Chatterton's life and death as given in his biography by Mr. David Masson, and you will, I think, allow that, whatever Mr. Wallis has attained, he has not realized the stern fact.

*Smith.* But we have wandered from the circumstance which first attracted us to this picture. Observe how minute the painting is. You have the wavering of the light on the rose-petals, you have every crease in the bed-cover, every chink in the garret wall. Would we have felt more for Chatterton if the dome of St. Paul's had been a blot of black paint and the walls of the cottage random sweeps of brown?

*Thom.* J. C. Hook is worthy to be mentioned with Wallis and Paton. Of him much may be expected, for he is one of those men who have really a great deal to say. His *Finding of Moses* is a beautiful and original picture. Perhaps for the first time in the history of Art

the true key-note in that incident, the strongest, purest, noblest tone of human emotion it affords, is struck. It was no doubt a grand sight, for any eyes which that morning beheld it, to see the Princess of Egypt, in glitter of jewels and stateliness of fine linen, surrounded by her maidens, proceeding to the river to bathe, or looking down upon the babe found among the bulrushes. But there was a heart near, whose palpitations expressed an emotion, to which any feeling in the breast of Pharaoh's daughter was a faint, fleeting tenderness, a slight womanly interest. A mother's heart was beating near, the heart of the mother of that child. And since the destinies of mankind hung upon the fate of that little boy, since Christendom lay folded in that frail cradle, a Divine hand led a little girl, standing by, up to Pharaoh's daughter, to offer to fetch a nurse for the child. The mother came. She took her boy into her arms, crushing down in her breast the tears of joy which forced themselves to her eyes with the importunity of anguish. Then she turned from the king's daughter, and clasping her babe to her breast, uplifted her streaming eyes to the God of Abraham, in gratitude unutterable. At that moment, the sublimity of the incident reached its climax; and that is the moment fixed upon by Mr. Hook. You see the mother in the foreground in the attitude described. In the background, not unseen but occupying only their natural station of importance, are the Princess and her maidens. The mind in which this picture originated must be gifted with no ordinary measure of power, emotional and intellectual.

*Smith.* Mr. Hook has not, to my knowledge, painted any other picture comparable to this. His more ordinary walk is quiet, homely life. In this department his feeling is so true that had he adopted the medium of words instead of colors, he could not have failed to secure an abid-

ing if not a sounding popularity, as a poet of the affections. Observe this simple picture. Had you passed the cottage and happened to note the little incident Mr. Hook records, it would probably have had power, slight as it is, to bring a tear into your eye. The boat has arrived, and the tired fisherman goes up the steep stone steps, leading from the beach to his dwelling. His wife has come out to meet and greet him. And how does her womanly, wifely instinct instruct her to give him the welcome that most will warm his heart? She brings out *their* child, just beginning, as the Scotch say, to "toddle," and pushes it gently before her on the steps. The little fellow has a timorous look, as if never before trusted so far from his mother's arms. The eyes of father and mother meet on him in one harmony of love. All this is doubtless very plain, very ordinary. Yet does not your heart bear witness to the power of the picture? Such men as Mr. Hook and Calcott Horsley — whose feeling is at times, I think, still more exquisite — must exercise a genial, salutary influence, at a time when Art is beginning really to lay a finger on the public heart.

*Thom.* By the bye, are we to omit *Burd Helen* by W. L. Windus? He is, indeed, an express pre-Raphaelite, and we have bidden adieu to such; but the laws of conversation permit us to double on our steps, and if any pre-Raphaelite is worth turning back for, he is Mr. Windus. The lines from the old Scotch ballad by which the painter explains his picture tell its story touchingly and well.

"Lord John he rode, Burd Helen ran,  
A live-lang simmer's day;  
Until they cam' to Clyde water,  
Was filled frae bank to brae.

'Seest thou yon water, Helen,' said he,  
'That flows from bank to brim?'  
'I trust to God, Lord John,' she said,  
'You ne'er will see me swim.'"

The girl clings to the stirrup leather with one hand, pressing the other to her side with a look of utter weariness and desolation. Lord Ronald looks down in stony heartlessness. The river flows before, and the ashy gray of an evening sky roofs the lone moorland. There is a fringe of ghostly trees on the sky-line. All this is true, and deeply imaginative. But I cannot think that the fearful character of the incident is brought out with perfectly sufficing power. At that time of the evening, the flanks of the horse would have been flecked with foam; all the jaunty pride, with which he pranced and curvetted in the morning, would have been broken with fatigue: but here he steps daintily along, as if setting out on his journey, no suggestion of weakness or weariness about him. In the face of the rider, too, it may at least be asked whether there is the determination necessary for the deed. Must not such cruelty have been "stubborned with iron?" This man looks piqued, provoked, petulant. His features, though blunt and base, are small. He is the image of spite, of meanness, of petty malevolence, not of such fiendish and inflexible cruelty as seems necessary for deeds like his or Iago's. We shall not, however, be dogmatic on this point. I am not sure that attainment in crime, that mastership in iniquity, writes itself even in a clouded form of those big bones and massive brows which denote strength of character. It is perhaps with feebleness of character, with incapacity to resist any suggestion of the flesh or the devil, with total and enervating absence of sym-

pathy with good, that colossal ability to commit cruelty best consists. It may be that we gratuitously postulate, in the soul of the utter villain, some such powers and feelings as, in our own, would have struggled with advancing depravity and gone down only after a fierce wrestle. It would have required a giant strength of will in most men never to have winced during the protracted agonies of Cook the victim of Palmer,—never to have flinched through the whole execution of that diabolic purpose. Yet the face of Palmer gave no indication of natural strength of character. It had no strong, noble bones. It was suffused with a foul dinginess of sensuality, and had no look even of dogged resolution. It had, now that I think of it, a distant generic resemblance to the face of Lord John in Mr. Windus's picture. Perhaps, therefore, the deliberate choice of the artist was truer than my hasty impression.

*Smith.* The day is westerling, and yet we have even glanced at very little in the wide kingdom of Art. I fear we must leave the greater part, until that promised day, when we are to have you at the old place, and you and I shall have another chat on our favorite subject, with mountains, clouds, and brooks for reference.

*Thom.* That is a pleasant prospect; we have indeed much to talk of. Only a few artists have passed in review before us. But we have not altogether erred in fixing our regards mainly on the prospective phases of Art, on the youthful and the promising. It is more important to know and hail the new than to linger about the old, whether to build over it a mausoleum or to pronounce on it a solemn anathema. We need not part, however, without saying a word or two about some of those painters who bulk more largely in the world's eye than those

we have mentioned, and whom general consent would set at the head of the contemporary British school.

In the treatment of marine subjects, as was allowed even by the somewhat ungenerous savans of the French Exposition, we stand supreme; and the first of living marine painters is Clarkson Stanfield. *The Abandoned* is a good example of his work. The scene is the "deep mid-ocean," no shore, no rock in sight. The wearied, mastless vessel has lain down like a spent animal after the shock of the last sea, when she is met by another fierce, massy buffet, the furious billow dashing once more over her timbers in wild, flying, filmy foam. The sky is broken in the midst, and a burst of white light streams down, pouring along the trough of the sea, and whitening every tossing wavelet, on the broad backs of the swells. That light will soon pass away; for to windward, a cloud, still blacker than those around the vessel, comes drifting swiftly on. Beneath the edges of that cloud, the livid waves spring, and writhe, and dance, in the mad music of the wind. Soon the canopy of a new storm will shroud the doomed ship in deeper night; and away she will roll, tossed from valley to valley by the might of the sea, borne into the remote solitudes of ocean never to return. The picture is one of genius and power. Stanfield is your true man to paint a wave. He knows it in all its freaks of motion, in all its wild play of glistening, wavering, flashing light. He has watched it in the fair, racing breeze, in the vexed choppings sea, where tides and winds contend, and under the murky tempest, when it gathers itself into a huge billow, fronting the blast like an angry brow, corrugated in agony and rage.

*Smith.* The genius of Collins seems to have been more pensive, and it may be less daring, than that of Stanfield.

In the rendering of far, faint horizons, and bleak, sandy flats of shore, I suppose he stands wholly unequalled. I could name no paintings which bear you so completely to the scenes they represent. The salt breeze cools your forehead; you shiver sympathetically with the fisherman, toiling along between wave and bent.

Cooke must surely be a substantial, hearty man, enjoying life, and going at his work with a will. His most generally chosen subjects, indeed, are rather of a quiet than a stirring character. He loves to paint boats with sails faintly flapping over slumbering seas, above which his clouds, permeated with that soft pale-yellow radiance of his, are a true and fitting drapery. But he can paint a strong gale, as well as a glassy sea. Observe this scene on the Adriatic; *Chioggian fishing vessels, &c., running into the lagune of Venice, on the approach of a borasco or violent squall.* You remark Cooke's characteristic orange on the broad sail of that big, bright boat, bounding like a sea-monster in front. How the thing of life leaps into that wave, laving her shoulders with the sheeted foam as the sea comes galloping like a race-horse from the left! She positively stands out from the sky amid the storm clouds. It was a sweeping and strong hand, I think, too, a joyous one, which painted that boat. The picture makes you hold your breath.

*Thom.* Sir Edwin Landseer is the most popular living painter. His subjects are not the highest, yet I cannot find it in my heart to grudge him his pre-eminence. He stands apart from all animal painters. If Turner can be alleged to have differed from other landscapists, by embracing in the comprehensiveness of his love and power all the moods of nature, while they dwelt on particular aspects, still more expressly may it be said of Landseer that he differs from

all animal painters, in having imparted to his own subject a breadth and dignity absolutely unexampled. He has thrown over the animal world the light of human association, a task hard to perform, but which he has accomplished with incomparable felicity. In bare realism, there may be one or two departments in which he has been equalled, I shall not say surpassed ; but wherever his supremacy as an animal painter may be disputed by another, the disputed glory is not, I think, worth contending for. The ferocity, terror, rage, and pain, of animal life, were perhaps never conveyed as by Snyders. But his pictures can be profitable only in such a manner as gladiatorial shows or prize fights might be profitable ; and can be vindicated only by such fallacies as might be urged in order to screen these from a just condemnation. I cannot look upon a group of bears and dogs rending each other, from the hand of Snyders, without being sensible that the man possessed observation to pierce, memory to seize, and a conquering power of execution. Grant that I find a certain lesson in the earnestness with which he must have devoted himself to his task, a certain encouragement in his marvellous success. As much as this can be said in favor of the moral advantage derived from him who, after his fight of an hour and twenty minutes, his one remaining eye starting bloodshot from his head, scarcely, for utter exhaustion, hears the shouts that hail his victory. The didactic uses of Snyders are perhaps as great as those of Ben Caunt or Harry Broom. But the sin of palliating the misuse of power by the very circumstance which lends that sin its aggravation, by the excellence of the gifts debased, has prevailed too widely in these hero-worshipping days. The time, I trust, will soon arrive, when Art shall disclaim, indignantly and forever, the base privilege of perpetuating what ought to be forgotten, and

bringing into light what decent nature vails in darkness. Complete and happy sympathy with what there is of idea or feeling in the pictures of Snyders would imply a gross, a ferocious, a brutish nature ; and, since distempered tastes are known to grow by what they feed on, all such pictures ought to be rejected unmercifully and with scorn. Let it be mentioned to Landseer's real honor, that he cannot dispute with Snyders his tarnished crown. A total exemption from blame cannot, indeed, be claimed for him. Once or twice he has fallen into the error of painting the base and revolting in animal life. No humane man could for a moment look upon the writhings of a transfixed otter, without pity, shame, horror ; and no painter ought to have pandered to the degraded tastes which could enjoy such a spectacle. But that was almost a solitary instance. The sound feeling of the multitude, which conferred popularity upon Landseer, warned him that such pictures were essentially wrong. In the overwhelming majority of cases, he has fallen into no such error. On the contrary, he has, as I said, shed over animal life an exquisite and novel illumination, poetical in a high sense, and partaking of countless delicate elements of humor, of pathos, of vivacity, of mirthfulness. I do n't know whether any pictorial critic, of the small, nibbling, pedantic order, has ever happened to lay down the limits of motive and expression, within which the animal painter ought to confine himself. It would be pleasant to compare the result with what Landseer has done, to note how and how often genius had overleaped the stakes of mediocrity. Landseer's animals are, with the possible exception I have noted, more like nature's animals than any ever painted. Yet he contrives, while painting them, to touch with cunning hand a thousand chords of human sympathy, glancing with delicate satire at human

foible, and gracefully suggesting the more deep and tender human emotions. Since, moreover, he is professedly an animal painter, no more would have been strictly demanded in his backgrounds than is given in those of Snyders or Hondekoeter. But he has scorned to avail himself of any such indulgence. He has given the solitude of the Arctic night, the sweep of the sea-horizon, and, above all, effects of mountain mist, in a manner which entitle him to high consideration among landscape painters. In power and range of expression, once more, while still strictly within his own province, he has surpassed not only all animal painters, but all prose and poetic fabulists. I remember no exception to the rule, that when writers have desired to draw any lesson from animal life, they have assumed a jocular, serio-comic tone. But Landseer's *Night* and *Morning* create no trivial emotions, make no appeal to the risible faculties.

The drear moonlight shivers through the storm, drifting along the lake, and all the mountains are wrapped in gloom. In the foreground, you see two stags in contest. Landseer's utmost power is here displayed; in the knotted sinews, entangled horns, and bloodshot eyes, of the animals, you have perfect expression of a rage stronger than anguish or death. This is *Night*. Turn to the companion picture. Morning has brought perfect peace. The lake, still as glass, watches for the first cloud to rise like a smile on the fair face of the sky. The mountains stand silent and beautiful, in the ruddy dawn. The noble stags are rigid in death, their limbs in the unyielding posture of their last grapple. And, see there, creeping up the hill, now almost touching the booty, with a look of archness, of cunning, of pure, approving satisfaction, which Landseer alone could have painted, the hill fox approaches his prey. The mountain eagle, too, is winging his way across the lake, snuffing the

feast. And thus the monarchs of the waste have ended their mortal duel ! Never, in prose or rhyme, was the story so grandly told. It is fable become epic.

Consider, again, his *Highland Nurses*, dedicated to Miss Nightingale. This is the second poem-picture called forth by the Russian War. The wounded stag has retired to die on the highest and loneliest crag, curtained by the mist. Two hinds bend over him and lick his wound. On the rock beside, are one or two mountain birds. Such a scene is probably impossible in animal life, yet who will say where the superadded expression, separating them from the animal world, becomes visible in those life-like hinds ? The pathos of the picture cannot but be felt.

It will be as an animal painter that Landseer is remembered. Yet I am assured that he would have succeeded if he had devoted himself exclusively to such high ideal painting as he has once or twice attempted. His *Peace* and *War* might alone support a reputation in this kind. *War* is all narrowness, gloom, horror. The steed and rider lie ghastly at the foot of the rampart, the fierce flames of the cannon flashing through the thick smoke around. *Peace* is all spaciousness, serenity, blessedness. The unfathomable blue of the sky, the broad, smiling ocean, the wide sweeps of sunny sward, these are themselves magnificent in conception, as a contrast to the walled up darkness of war. Then there is the bright grass over the sea ; the lamb crops the green blade that has grown in the mouth of the rusty cannon ; a few glad children sport in front ; and there is no question to agitate the mind, more serious than the solution of the thread-puzzle on the child's hands.

*Smith.* Shall we pretend to have had a conversation upon the aspects of Art in Great Britain, yet pass by William Mallord Turner ? I have so far shaken off my

despicable bashfulness, that I shall venture to say a word or two of that great artist, and with them let this desultory chat, which to me at least has been pleasant, come to a close.

A complete or final idea of the character and achievements of Turner's genius I cannot profess to have formed. But I have had somewhat uncommon opportunities of observing his pictures, and have examined innumerable engravings from his works. I can say with decision, that I have discerned certain lineaments, vague yet unmistakable, of a gigantic mind, great in its simplicity, in its massiveness, in its sweep of comprehension, in its concentration of energy. Turner had none of your perked and paltry originalities about him. His power of plagiarism was as magnificent as Shakspeare's, Goethe's, or Carlyle's. His real originality was no more doubtful than theirs. "He who has really caught the mantle of the prophet, is the last man to imitate his walk :" and he who catches the mantle, without imitating the gait, is the true original. Turner was the most earnest of scholars; he reminds you continually of other painters; but what he found brick, he left marble. As a realist, his grasp was irresistible, and will not now be questioned. But it is my deliberate opinion that as a poet he was more wonderful than as a realist. He rendered mountains and skies, forests and streams, as they had never previously been rendered. Every bone in the frames of the reclining giants whose weight steadies the earth, every wrinkle on their brows, every gleam of light upon their craggy foreheads, he brought out with solitary power. The springing also of the bough and the sinewy strength of the stem, the wayward grace of the river and boiling torrent foam, the hot haze, swooning over the distances of mid-summer, the scenery of the upper heavens, the lurid or

fiery red of stormy sunset, all were Turner's own. But if he surpassed other painters in these and other provinces of pure realism, he surpassed them still more, as I said, in strictly poetic, in creative might. Who could select like Turner? You know that city and the scenery in which it is embosomed: but did you ever see it in that grandeur of attitude, could any other painter have showed you it *so*? You would say cities and mountains were proud to sit to their great portrait-painter, since none could perceive like him their characteristic points, none could so elicit and combine their distinctive and contrasted beauties, none could let them so well be seen. Yet selection is by no means the only power of Turner. Taste might go far to impart or regulate a power of selection, but the sovereign imagination alone could give the deepest poetry that dwells in Turner's pictures. He seems, by life-long observation and musing, to have detected nature's secrets of effect, her modes of contrast, her suggestions of thought: and his imagination struck out more grandly than at which she aimed. The strength and stateliness of the precipice, the majesty of mountain shadow, the exulting magnificence of broad streaming light, the mysterious suggestion of infinitude, by the steep and soaring line of mountain side lost in the hanging clouds that seem to vail immensity, are all as it were vocal in a picture by Turner. The mountains are no longer dumb; Turner caught their inarticulate accents; and when he made them speak, all could understand them. This is not an easy thing to explain in words; but the universal sentiment as to prints from Turner proves that I am not alone in finding in his works the most poetic renderings of nature's deepest expressions. A critic, whose literary immortality is, I think, as secure as that of Sporus or King Colley, is severe upon Mr. Ruskin for demanding

thought in pictures. The thoughts that are built up in the mountains may be to him a great mystery. But if you ask me where you will find thought, poetry, invention, in landscape painting, I refer you to any volume of engravings after Turner.

I cannot fix upon any picture to illustrate all the characteristics of Turner's genius, and to more than one picture, I must not now refer. Let me take one almost indiscriminately. In Lord Ellesmere's Gallery, there is a large picture by Turner, painted evidently after the great Vandervelde in the same collection. I shall briefly compare the two.

The Vandervelde contains a considerable number of vessels. In front is a Dutch packet-ship, a gleam of color on its sail from the dreary sunlight to windward. It mounts a broken sea, dipping into its foam, which dashes up over the bows. To leeward is a ship with sails clewed up, facing the wind. The sky has two great banks of cloud, one of them again dividing into three tower-like masses, through which is shed a faint illumination of stormy sunlight. The sea in front is broken, yeasty, racing before the wind with fearful velocity. Look now to the Turner.

One vast bank of cloud, piled mountain after mountain, comes darkening over the waves, "cramming all the blast before it." Its rounded tops are steeped in the sombre light which appears in the Vandervelde. A gleam of the same rests on the sail in front. The whole under-part of the great bank of cloud is black and thundery; beneath, the white waves are seen mysteriously rising and writhing. In the distance, a tall, three-masted ship has furled all sail and looks towards the blast. In front, two small vessels are lifted into prominence, running foul of each other, the one with canvas down, the other with bellying sail attempt-

ing to hold up to the wind. A sea strikes them both, dashing in wild foam over the bow of that one which has its sail spread. The waves in the foreground roll in one or two huge, angry ridges, the trough of the sea being filled with seething foam.

It is known that the picture by Turner is a companion to that by Vandervelde, and was a direct attempt either to imitate or to grapple with it. But mark how the conception, or rather conceptions, of Vandervelde, gain from the touch of Turner. The forms of the Dutchman's picture seem to have been dissolved or sent apart, and again brought together, into grander, simpler masses, at the word of a mightier imagination. Vandervelde's sea is covered with ships. Only one or two break the loneliness and gloom of Turner's. The sea of Vandervelde is chopp ing and gusty, a broad plain of countless equal waves. One or two mighty ridges, with millions of wavelets in their hollows, occupy the front of Turner's. But the alteration in which the master mind and hand are most signally displayed is that passed upon the clouds. These all come together in Turner's picture; no division breaks the unity of the simple, overpowering mass; it rolls on there, dark, heavy, towering, majestic, in the grandeur and terror of tempest.

It could, I think, be distinctly proved, that a change, similar to that observable in Turner's treatment of Vandervelde's subject, was effected by him in all that he made, by earnest study, his own. The conceptions of other artists I compare to the many hills, interesting, varied, beautiful, of the newer geological formations. They may be the picturesque crags of the limestone, they may even be the jagged crests of the metamorphic hills; but they are comparatively low and comparatively many: the imagination

of Turner, working from lower deeps and with mightier power, upheaved the central ridge, the primary mountain chain, rising above all the rest, unapproached in height, and unbroken and alone in majesty. Composition becomes, with him, vital artistic unity; prettiness becomes noble symmetry and proportion; beauty becomes sublimity. I think I can admire the grace and elegance, the liquid sky and limpid water, the ordered pillars and dignified fronts, of Claude. But my perception of the fact that a precipice is more majestic than a palace gable, is hardly more distinct than my perception of a greatness and majesty in the forms of Turner totally absent from those of Claude. The latter is to the former as Pope was to Homer. And this I say while aware of the historical fact that Turner studied Claude with tears of despairing admiration in his eyes.

And so, farewell.

## V.

### RUSKIN AND HIS CRITICS.

OUR good friends the artists must not be too hard upon us. It would be pleasant, if one only could, to school our ideas exactly to their standard: to watch their cunning pencils, as they bring out lines and hues, too exquisite for our exoteric capacities; to follow their clever pens, as they set down artistic rules, according to which alone we ignoble vulgar must be pleased or displeased; to admire nothing but what they tell us is admirable; to believe nothing but what they tell us is credible; and to find vent for our free activity, only in the becoming and ennobling privilege of paying out the cash. If one could but do this, he might be lapped in the music of their most sweet voices, and bask in a sunshine as pure as Claude's. He might even be patted with benignant condescension on the back, pronounced a man of taste and culture, called a judicious critic and a felicitous collector. Then would gradually gather around him that delicate, translucent vail, that misty, mysterious garment, whose qualities precisely reverse those of the shirt of Hercules, for it thrills with exquisite pleasure the whole frame of the wearer, and causes his breast to swell with the sublime consciousness of connoisseurship, and flutters all bosoms in the dove-cots of fashion, and awakens, when it appears, a whisper, instinct

with veneration, spirit-stirring, that here is a veritable and most alarming lion, having no relationship to Bully Bottom the weaver. This might, indeed, be delightful; but the conditions of the enjoyment are hard. Admiration, sympathy, pleasure, are precisely the things that will not force: the very consciousness of our human freedom is bound up with them. Great, also, as the studio and the Art-gallery are, the world is, on the whole, neither a studio nor an Art-gallery. Interests manifold and important, religious, social, domestic, will not cease to play their parts there, in remarkable independence of the rules of the studio. Pictures, moreover, are there prepared for us, of a beauty wondrous, inexhaustible, older than those of the oldest masters, old as the mountains and the skies, with which we cannot help being rather impressed, but which we cannot perfectly see or understand, until some one show them unto us. We must not, therefore, consent to the consecration to Art of a little temple, not only apart from the great world, but shut against it; we must forego the proud honor of being connoisseurs; we must content ourselves with distinctions common to mortal men.

Ruskin must not be given up wholly to the artists. True it is, and let the fact be stated with due emphasis, that we believe him to be, in the province of Art, strictly defined, a critic of marvellous accuracy and of no less marvellous comprehensiveness, whose sympathy, universally acknowledged, is not one whit more remarkable than his science. True it is, that we think we hold in our hand the threads of a detailed and indubitable demonstration of this. Yet Ruskin cannot be viewed solely as a critic of what is generally understood as Art. Nay, he cannot be correctly judged of in the capacity of Art-critic, if he is contemplated in that alone. The nature of man is a unity, and no man

can engage long or earnestly in any work, without exhibiting the essential characteristics which that unity comprehends. We must regard Ruskin in at least three aspects: as a poet of external nature, a revealer of its beauties, a narrator of its facts; as a thinker, impelled by sympathies of extraordinary power, to reflect on the general condition, religious and social, of mankind; and as a critic, who has brought the general capacities of his nature, primarily and systematically, to an examination of the mode in which the nations of Christendom have pursued and embodied the Beautiful, with special reference to that pursuit and embodiment in his own country, in his own time. It is distinctly to be understood that, if he has radically failed in this last department, he cannot be defended. He might have been a Richter to perceive the beauty of nature; he might have cast abroad, like a Luther, the seeds of moral and religious truth: but he came before the world as an Art-critic, and if he failed here, he failed in what he chose and professed as his life-work. But, thus conceding that no excellence in other provinces could have redeemed failure in this, it may be allowed us to add, that an extraordinary power to perceive natural beauty, and a remarkable range and nobleness of human sympathy, *might* promote instead of counteracting ability to treat expressly of Art, nay, if not implying such ability, is indispensable to it. If Art had not a distinct character,—separable both from physical beauty and human excellence,—it would not have a distinct name. But can it be denied that, standing on her own watch-tower, Art casts her eye now towards the world of nature, now towards the world of man, for suggestion, instruction, and inspiration? The connection between Art and nature, be it what it may, is at least intimate and indissoluble; and a knowledge of nature, and a

broad and earnest sympathy with human interests, furnish a presumption in favor of the Art-critic. It would surely be unnecessary to argue with any one who did not look upon an enthusiasm in Art, unable to connect itself with enthusiasm in nature and sympathy with men, as either partial, affected, or altogether unsound. The strong sense of humanity will always recognize, in those wider emotions, the best guarantee of excellence in every species of criticism; and in endeavoring to attain a correct understanding of any critical system, to form a sound estimate of the capacities and achievements of any critic, it will not fail to commend itself as the best mode of procedure, to commence with a survey, in relation to each, of such initial feelings. The artists, therefore, and connoisseurs, must for a little stand aside, while we consult, touching the critic they revile, the oracles of nature.

With an explicitness which was a duty, and with that scientific calmness, with which any man may recall and state the impressions of boyhood, Mr. Ruskin has informed us of the emotions, with which, in his earliest years, he looked upon nature. The passage to which we allude, occurring in the third volume of *Modern Painters*, may fearlessly be pronounced one of the most important, as well as interesting and beautiful, in the whole range of biography. We can quote but a part of it. "The first thing," he says, "which I remember, as an event in life, was being taken by my nurse to the brow of Friar's Crag on Derwentwater; the intense joy, mingled with awe, that I had in looking through the hollows in the mossy roots, over the crag into the dark lake, has associated itself more or less with all twining roots of trees ever since. Two other things I remember, as, in a sort, beginnings of life,—crossing Shapfells, being let out of the chaise to run up the hills,

— and going through Glenfarg, near Kinross, in a winter's morning, when the rocks were hung with icicles ; these being culminating points in an early life of more travelling than is usually indulged to a child. In such journeyings, whenever they brought me near hills, and in all mountain ground and scenery, I had a pleasure, as early as I can remember, and continuing till I was eighteen or twenty, infinitely greater than any which has been since possible to me in anything ; comparable for intensity only to the joy of a lover in being near a noble and kind mistress, but no more explicable or definable than that feeling of love itself.

. . . . . Although there was no definite religious sentiment mingled with it, there was a continual perception of sanctity in the whole of nature, from the slightest thing to the vastest ; — an instinctive awe, mixed with delight ; an indefinable thrill, such as we sometimes imagine to indicate the presence of a disembodied spirit. I could only feel this perfectly when I was alone ; and then it would often make me shiver from head to foot with the joy and fear of it, when after being some time away from hills, I first got to the shore of a mountain river, where the brown water circled among the pebbles, or when I saw the first swell of distant land against the sunset, or the first low broken wall, covered with mountain moss. I cannot in the least *describe* the feeling ; but I do not think this is my fault or that of the English language, for, I am afraid, no feeling is describable. If we had to explain even the sense of bodily hunger to a person who had never felt it, we should be hard put to it for words ; and this joy in nature seemed to me to come of a sort of heart-hunger, satisfied with the presence of a Great and Holy Spirit. These feelings remained in their full intensity till I was eighteen or twenty, and then, as the reflective and practical power increased, and the ‘ cares of

this world' gained upon me, faded gradually away, in the manner described by Wordsworth in his *Intimations of Immortality.*"

It is of the emotions experienced amid mountain scenery that Mr. Ruskin here more expressly speaks. But the passage reveals a mental and physical organization, generally adapted to derive pleasure from the appearances of nature, altogether peculiar ; and of mountains themselves it must be remembered, that every form of scenery, of the highest beauty or grandeur, excepting only the sublime solitude or majestic fury of the central ocean, belongs pre-eminently to them. It is from the mountain that you behold the sky above and the valley below, the cloud on the shoulders of the hill, the torrent thundering in its chasm, the forest climbing among the crags, the lake slumbering around its promontories. That "intense, superstitious, insatiable, and beatific perception" of the grandeur and loveliness of mountain scenery, which characterized Ruskin in childhood and youth, implied a perception of all that is grandest and loveliest in God's earthly creation.

The words in which Ruskin has consciously described his early passion for nature's beauty are brief and unpretentious, marked by a noble and manly modesty. But the attestation of that passion which he soon unconsciously made, the manifestation forced on him by the abounding of the gift, is as imposing as it is conclusive. At an age when most clever young men are bent on distinction in debating societies, or resting on their laurels as prize versifiers, he published the first volume of *Modern Painters*. Had it been the work of a life-time, it would have secured an immortality of renown : and if one or two works, produced at a similar age, have indicated a genius equally rare, it seems open to no dispute that no work ever published by a

very young man effected so profound and important a revolution. It at once took a separate and solitary place among works in English prose. In style and in matter, it was unique. It recalled what had passed entirely out of English composition, the stately march and long-drawn cadence of Hooker and Taylor; beside the richness of its descriptive detail, the *Trareller* was bare, the *Lady of the Lake* general and indefinite; while its clearness of conception, its vigor, and business-like tone, belonged distinctively to prose, and, if not distinctively, at least conspicuously, to the nineteenth century. Its matter was equally remarkable and as original. At a consideration of its doctrines, we have not yet arrived, but its principal contents were a series of descriptions of the aspects of nature, and to these the language could show no parallel. Nay, it was, perhaps, in the nature of things impossible, that at any previous time they could have been produced. A great invention is possible only at one period. The fact is proved by the circumstance that the history of invention is a history of controversy, that great discoveries have often, if not uniformly, been made by different minds about the same time. The production of the first volume of *Modern Painters* in the sixteenth century was equally impossible with the discovery of fluxions in the ninth. This assertion means simply that, at the date of the appearance of this volume, certain elements had entered into civilization, certain agencies had come to bear upon the general mind, absent in other centuries, whose presence was indispensable to its suggestion or accomplishment. Proof of this is necessary, but conclusive proof is at hand.

During the eighteenth century, and with accelerated speed during the early part of the present, a great process went on, by which the ideas of men, touching the realm of physical nature, were rectified and defined. The most

prominent intellectual characteristic of the epoch is scientific activity. The prospect embraced within the ken of science continued gradually to widen, until, before the middle of this century, it might be said to comprehend the whole sphere of terrestrial existence, and the material aspects of the astral heavens. From the frigid crags of Iceland to the cactus-hedges of the Cape, from the pebble at your foot to the nebula in the outer deeps of space, from the flower of yesterday to the tree-ferns of the carboniferous period, Science had extended her gaze. Fancy and imagination seemed about to be extinguished, or to become the mere eyes of science. No ocean was now supposed to hide Isles of the Blessed; no Atlantis could now rise before the eyes of the voyager. Geology told you the forms of the mountains. Meteorology guessed at the balancing of the clouds. The lightning went faster and further, as the slave of man, than it ever went from its own lone dwelling in the thunder-cloud. The beasts of the forest had been watched and classified; the flowers of the field were named and known; the very rainbows, with which, from time immemorial, the sun had wreathed the mist and foam of Orinoco, could not escape the eye of science.

It is plain that any mind of remarkable power and susceptibility, going through the stages of culture and development in a time thus characterized, could not escape the pervading influence. Ruskin did not escape it: but it is important to note the nature of the impress which his genius received. His capacity was not distinctively scientific. Taking Coleridge's antithesis between science and poetry, it was rather poetic. That emotion which played so important a part in his early history found satisfaction, not in analysis and classification, but in contemplation,

reverence, and wonder. So mighty, however, was that feeling, so earnest and perpetual its action, that its result was a knowledge of the external appearances of nature, poetic in its order but scientific in its accuracy: while it cannot be doubted that, at a certain stage of its early manifestation, the expressly scientific influence of the time came in to assist and define it. The first volume of *Modern Painters* reveals both influences. It gives express evidence of scientific knowledge: it is, from first to last, one tissue of evidence of that pure sensibility, which finds delight in simply looking on the face of nature, and which necessitates knowledge. This combination of science with poetry it is, which imparts essential originality to the volume of which we speak; and so closely allied is such a combination, with the general character of the age, that it may be confidently asserted that it could not have existed, as it certainly did not exist, in any other.

The critics have said things about Ruskin which are to us amazing, which only the evidence of sense could render credible. But we have not yet seen it asserted that he is ignorant of nature. Into this arena no critic has ventured deliberately and openly to step. The wildest fury of insolence, the utmost assurance of imbecility, has here confined itself to feeble innuendo or nursery flippancy. And when we contemplate, in all the comprehensiveness of its range, in all the correctness of its science, in all the glory of its poetry, that revelation of nature which he has made, this is perhaps, even considering what critics Ruskin has had, not wonderful. One is apt, as he reads, to imagine that the whole capacities and the whole life of the author had been devoted to the study of that class of natural appearances with which he is at the moment concerned. Listen to Ruskin's description of the sea, and you

think he must have spent his days and years, in watching the beauty of its garlanded summer waves, and the tortured writhing of its wintry billows. Follow his eye as it ranges over the broad fields of the sky, and you are impressed with the idea, that it can never have been turned from observing the procession of the clouds across the blue, or tracing the faint streaks of the cirri, lying, like soft maiden's hair, along heaven's azure, or watching the sun as he touches the whole sky with gold and scarlet and vermillion, to be for him a regal tent at eventide. Go with him into the forest, and you believe that he has studied nothing else, but the forms of stem and branch, the arrangement of light and shade in the hollows of the foliage. Enter with him the cathedral of the mountains, mark attentively as he points out "their gates of rock, pavements of cloud, choirs of stream and stone, altars of snow, and vaults of purple traversed by the continual stars," and you conclude that there he must always have worshipped. But when you have passed with him from province to province of nature's beauty, and have found that in each he is a seer and revealer, can you fail to acknowledge the justice and modesty of his claim, not to be accused of arrogance in asserting that he has walked with nature? Can you, moreover, turn from the loveliness and splendor of the successive visions which have risen before you, without knowing nature better, loving her more, and associating with her loftier, purer, mightier emotions, of reverence and wonder, than ever theretofore?

We have said that, in the sphere of simple description of nature's facts, Ruskin has not been directly and deliberately met. But among the many half-amusing, half-offensive exhibitions of tip-toe mediocrity, trying to see up to the height of this original genius, if haply it may discover that

it is merely a small mediocrity like itself, set on some sort of stilts, there have not been wanting hints that Ruskin's "word-painting" is an easy matter. The grandiose mediocrity who, rather condescendingly, consented, once and away, to annihilate Ruskin in the *Quarterly*, is of this opinion. The less grandiose mediocrity who reviewed the first Exhibition Pamphlet in the *Art Journal* utters some expressions, conceived to be like Ruskin's, and remarks that it is easy for the latter to write like this, however difficult it might, we suppose, be, to discuss the high matters with which his serene littleness is conversant. The compliment thus paid to Ruskin is really too high. He might rival Shakspeare in describing Dover Cliff, but there is no ground for believing, that he could dramatically body forth a Slender or an Aguecheek. We verily believe him incompetent, by the utmost effort, to write what his small critic comically fancies is in his manner. But we have no difficulty whatever in making, to these and all other critics of Ruskin, the concession, that there is such a thing as vague and empty verbosity, that there may be glowing, brilliant, fluent diction, without value of thought, sentiment, or information. A book may glitter all over with rhetorical ornament, may sparkle with metaphor, may, by alliteration and antithesis, please the ear and fix the attention, yet be worthless. But the descriptions of Ruskin are done in a style, which nothing but an ignorance, too crass and unconscious to be ashamed, or a perception jaundiced by malevolence, could confound with the mere glitter of volatile feebleness. There is a correspondence between all the real gifts of nature. The true gleam, if you only know it, will always lead you to the real gold. Able thinkers have recognized,—among them, in express terms, Coleridge and Carlyle,—that a linguistic capacity of sterling and surpassing excellence is

always connected with real mental faculty, intellectual or emotional. And we assert with perfect confidence, that such verbal pictures as are drawn by Ruskin never were drawn, and could not possibly be drawn, without the existence of such real faculty. They are distinguished by one quality which never pertains to false rhetoric: the quality of unity. You may string together fact after fact, and, to make their jingle somewhat more musical, you may put ever so many sounding adjectives between. But in order to place before the eye of the reader the distinct features of a face, nay the exact likeness of a tree, a flower, a snow-flake, so that he will have each plainly within the sphere of his vision, an act of real observation must have been performed, a capacity to see what is distinctive must have been possessed, a certain amount of genuine mental force must have been put in exercise. And if a man sets before you, in all its breadth and clearness, a wide landscape, letting you see its main lines as distinctly as in a surveyor's map, yet covering it with the very colors in which nature has dressed it, it becomes mere stupidity and ignorance to deny the display of real mental power. The easel of a great painter might be covered with brilliant colors, yet the whole would be a daub; the picture he has completed may show every tint on the easel, it may show a great many more, and yet be no daub: in the one case, the colors mean nothing, they are held together by no relation; in the other, every color is in its own place, every tint is vocal, and the voice of the whole is one. Would it not be a poor mistake, to confound the richness and abundance of the picture's color, with the confused brilliancy produced by the many colors of the daub? Yet this is precisely the pitiful and painful mistake of those critics, who, having discovered, by the exercise of their critical genius, that

where there is verbiage there must be many words, exclaim, whenever they perceive many words, that there is verbiage. Ruskin's words are used to bring out the minutest facts of nature, the light and shade on a blade of grass, the blending of hue in the rainbow, the melting into each other of the cloud-shadows upon the mountain side ; and critics such as now find admission into the *Quarterly*, whose verbal powers, of fair average excellence, are to those of Ruskin, as the pictorial talents of a sign-painter are to those of Noel Paton, sneer at his facile word-painting. To show the flickering dance of sunbeams on forest leaves, to set before us the very spring and prancing of the waves, to word-paint the wreathing of the mist and every caprice and humor of the sky, required rather an abundant supply of words ; but the supply at Ruskin's command was a small matter to his power of laying them on, to the exquisite precision with which he applied every vocable. In all that we are now saying, we must, for proof, appeal mainly to our own experience, and refer the reader to Ruskin's own pages. We do not, for our part, recall a single instance, in which he has deliberately set himself to place a scene before our eyes, without enabling us, after a sufficiently close and steady look, to see it in its grand, consistent features. We invite readers to test the matter for themselves. But we shall quote one passage, which exhibits as well as any we can recollect, the so-called verbiage of Ruskin. Our readers shall peruse it, before we make any remarks upon it. It is a description of the Fall of Schaffhausen :— “Stand for an hour beside the Fall of Schaffhausen, on the north side where the rapids are long, and watch how the vault of water first bends, unbroken, in pure polished velocity, over the arching rocks at the brow of the cataract, covering them with a dome of crystal twenty feet thick, so swift

that its motion is unseen except when a foam globe from above darts over it like a falling star ; and how the trees are lighted above it under all their leaves, at the instant that it breaks into foam ; and how all the hollows of that foam burn with green fire like so much shattering chrysoprase ; and how, ever and anon, startling you with its white flash, a jet of spray leaps hissing out of the fall, like a rocket, bursting in the wind and driven away in dust, filling the air with light ; and how, through the curdling wreaths of the restless crashing abyss below, the blue of the water, paled by the foam in its body, shows purer than the sky through white rain-cloud ; while the shuddering iris stoops in tremulous stillness over all, fading and flushing alternately through the choking spray and shattered sunshine, hiding itself at last among the thick golden leaves which toss to and fro in sympathy with the wild water ; their dripping masses lifted at intervals, like sheaves of loaded corn, by some stronger gush from the cataract, and bowed again upon the mossy rocks as its roar dies away ; the dew gushing from their thick branches through drooping clusters of emerald herbage, and sparkling in white threads along the dark rocks of the shore, feeding the lichens which chase and chequer them with purple and silver.”

It is possible that, at first glance, this may appear a mass of gorgeous confusion : and it is certain that a hurried glance will convey but a slight idea of what it contains. In following the long evolution of the sentence, something of fatigue may be experienced, and the description would doubtless have been more generally and readily appreciated, had the mind been rested by one or two stops skilfully inserted. But it may be questioned whether the impression of concentrated power, of mass, of urgent,

irresistible haste, could have been so well conveyed by a succession of sentences. The point to be peculiarly noted, however, is the nature of the "verbiage," abundant enough no doubt, of the passage. Let the reader, amid all its plenitude of adjective, set his finger, if he can, upon an epithet that could be dispensed with, a word which does not state some fact or define some quality. Had the same space been filled with ejaculations about the grandeur and sublimity of the scene — had we heard only of Titanic power, and inexpressible beauty, and tremendous velocity — there would have been an example of verbiage. But examine the passage clause by clause, and you find that its richness of expression is not by any means so remarkable as its condensation. The significance of the adjective "polished," applied to the velocity of the vaulted water, might be expanded into pages. You are told, in one word, that the rocks at the brow of the cataract are arched; you see the light breaking up from the foam under the leaves; you are led from sight to sight, until you know the tints of the lichens on the wetted rocks, and mark the foam paling the water under its surface; and from first to last there is not an indefinite touch, a superfluous word. To attempt to detail what is in the passage is found to be impossible: you cannot say *what* Ruskin has told you in so few words as he has told it.

But masterly as this description is, it can rank only with the less remarkable among Ruskin's pictures of external nature. The subject to be described was comparatively circumscribed, and there was little assistance rendered to the associative imagination, in connecting its bare facts with human sympathy. But in descriptions too numerous to be referred to here, — in such pictures as that of the Campagna of Rome under evening light, and that of Tur-

ner's Slave Ship,—not only are the grand lines of fact put strongly in, but that idealizing power is displayed, which, on whatever occasion, or in whatever form exhibited, whether in the poetry of a Shakspeare or Byron, in the prose of a Carlyle, a Richter, a Ruskin, in the colors of a Titian or Turner, seems to be radically the same, and marks the highest genius. If any single example of Ruskin's display of this power were to be regarded as more than an indication, a faint suggestion, of what he has done, the error would be complete: but if the reader can appreciate a very small part in its bearing upon the whole, and thinks it important, as we do, that, in every form of criticism, at least an opportunity should be afforded of comparing the writer's words with his allegations, he may not deem it inappropriate that we subjoin two passages, which, if not in Ruskin's very highest style, yet appear to us to display, along with the unfailing realism, the scientific accuracy, of which so much has been said, traces of that higher power which is characteristic of consummate genius. The first is from the second volume of *The Stones of Venice*, the second from the third volume of *Modern Painters*.

BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF THE SCENERY OF EUROPE, IN ITS CORRESPONDENCE WITH NATIONAL CHARACTER.

"The charts of the world which have been drawn up by modern science have thrown into a narrow space the expression of a vast amount of knowledge, but I have never yet seen any one pictorial enough to enable the spectator to imagine the kind of contrast in physical character which exists between northern and southern countries. We know the differences in detail, but we have not that broad glance and grasp which would enable us to feel them in their ful-

ness. We know that gentians grow on the Alps, and olives on the Apennines; but we do not enough conceive for ourselves that variegated mosaic of the world's surface which a bird sees in its migration,—that difference between the district of the gentian and of the olive, which the stork and the swallow see far off, as they lean upon the sirocco wind. Let us for a moment try to raise ourselves even above the level of their flight, and imagine the Mediterranean lying beneath us like an irregular lake, and all its ancient promontories sleeping in the sun: here and there an angry spot of thunder, a gray stain of storm, moving upon the burning field; and here and there a fixed wreath of white volcano smoke, surrounded by its circle of ashes; but for the most part a great peacefulness of light, Syria and Greece, Italy and Spain, laid like pieces of golden pavement into the sea-blue, chased, as we stoop nearer to them, with bossy beaten-work of mountain chains, and glowing softly with terraced gardens, and flowers heavy with frankincense, mixed among masses of laurel, and orange, and plumpy palm, that abate with their gray-green shadows the burning of the marble rocks, and of the ledges of porphyry sloping under lucent sand. Then let us pass further towards the north, until we see the orient colors change gradually into a vast belt of rainy green, where the pastures of Switzerland, and poplar valleys of France, and dark forests of the Danube and Carpathians, stretch from the mouths of the Loire to those of the Volga, seen through clefts in gray swirls of rain-cloud and flaky veils of the mist of the brooks, spreading low along the pasture lands: and then, further north still, to see the earth heave into mighty masses of leaden rock and heathy moor, bordering with a broad waste of gloomy purple that belt of field and wood, and splintering into irregular and

grisly islands, amidst the northern seas, beaten by storm, and chilled by ice-drift, and tormented by furious pulses of contending tide, until the roots of the last forests fail from among the hill ravines, and the hunger of the north wind bites the peaks into barrenness; and, at last, the wall of ice, durable like iron, sets, death-like, its white teeth against us out of the polar twilight. And having once traversed in thought this gradation of the zoned iris of the earth in all its material vastness, let us go down nearer to it, and watch the parallel change in the belt of animal life: the multitudes of swift and brilliant creatures that glance in the air and sea, or tread the sands of the southern zone; striped zebras and spotted leopards, glistening serpents and birds arrayed in purple and scarlet. Let us contrast their delicacy and brilliancy of color and swiftness of motion, with the frost-cramped strength, and shaggy covering, and dusky plumage of the northern tribes; contrast the Arabian horse with the Shetland, the tiger and leopard with the wolf and bear, the antelope with the elk, the bird of Paradise with the osprey; and then, submissively acknowledging the great laws by which the earth and all that it bears are ruled throughout their being, let us not condemn, but rejoice in the expression by man of his own rest in the statutes of the land which gave him birth. Let us watch him with reverence as he sets side by side the burning gems, and smoothes with soft sculpture the jasper pillars, that are to reflect a ceaseless sunshine, and rise into a cloudless sky: but not with less reverence let us stand by him, when, with rough strength and hurried stroke, he smites an uncouth animation out of the rocks which he has torn from among the moss of the moorland, and heaves into the darkened air the pile of iron buttress and rugged wall, instinct with

work of an imagination as wild and wayward as the northern sea ; creations of ungainly shape and rigid limb, but full of wolfish life ; fierce as the winds that beat, and changeful as the clouds that shade them."

#### THE GREAT MOUNTAINS.

" Inferior hills ordinarily interrupt, in some degree, the richness of the valleys at their feet ; the gray downs of southern England, and treeless coteaux of central France, and gray swells of Scottish moor, whatever peculiar charm they may possess in themselves, are at least destitute of those which belong to the woods and fields of the Lowlands. But the great mountains *lift* the lowlands *on their sides*. Let the reader imagine, first, the appearance of the most varied plain of some richly cultivated country ; let him imagine it dark with graceful woods, and soft with deepest pastures ; let him fill the space of it, to the utmost horizon, with innumerable and changeful incidents of scenery and life ; leading pleasant streamlets through its meadows, strewing clusters of cottages beside their banks, tracing sweet footpaths through its avenues, and animating its fields with happy flocks, and slow wandering spots of cattle ; and when he has wearied himself with endless imagining, and left no space without some loveliness of its own, let him conceive all this great plain, with its infinite treasures of natural beauty and happy human life, gathered up in God's hands from one edge of the horizon to the other, like a woven garment ; and shaken into deep falling folds, as the robes droop from a king's shoulders ; all its bright rivers leaping into cataracts along the hollows of its fall, and all its forests rearing themselves aslant against its slopes, as a rider rears himself back when his horse plunges ; and all its villages nestling themselves into the new wind-

ings of its glens; and all its pastures thrown into steep waves of greensward, dashed with dew along the edges of their folds, and sweeping down into endless slopes, with a cloud here and there lying quietly, half on the grass, half in the air; and he will have as yet, in all this lifted world, only the foundation of one of the great Alps. And whatever is lovely in the lowland scenery becomes lovelier in this change: the trees which grew heavily and stiffly from the level line of plain assume strange curves of strength and grace as they bend themselves against the mountain side; they breathe more freely, and toss their branches more carelessly as each climbs higher, looking to the clear light above the topmost leaves of its brother tree; the flowers which on the arable plain fell before the plough, now find out for themselves unapproachable places, where year by year they gather into happier fellowship, and fear no evil; and the streams which in the level land crept in dark eddies by unwholesome banks, now move in showers of silver, and are clothed with rainbows, and bring health and life wherever the glance of their waves can reach."

We have said that if Ruskin has erred in his express Art-criticism, he cannot be defended from the charge of having radically mistaken his duty, and failed in what he selected as the business of his life. This remark we do not in any sense qualify. We beg leave, also, to observe, that for artists and their art, we entertain a deep respect. Painters in general are certainly raised above the ordinary run of men, by the delicacy of their tastes and by their devotion to beauty: painting is an art which may afford the purest delight, and enoble while it pleases. But we must maintain that, however erroneous Ruskin's Art-theories might be proved, the revelations of nature which he has made would

entitle him to separate and lofty honor ; and that, when artists, believing they demonstrate his errors in matters connected solely with Art, imagine that they altogether disentitle him to regard,—prove him a man of small capacity or achievement,—they wholly misconceive their powers, and the attitude in which both they and Ruskin stand to the public. They and he, looked at in one important aspect, stand between us and nature. If Ruskin's word-paintings show us more of nature than their color-paintings, we shall not permit the *manner* of their representation to prejudice us against him and in favor of them. Art may be difficult to know and understand : but nature is not so easy. Custom has cast over her face its obscuring veil ; we require to be awakened to pierce it, we require to have it drawn aside that we may see the features beneath. It seems to be an ordinance of Providence in this world—and it is a benign and beautiful ordinance—that everything, excepting, and that perhaps not always, the influence of the Divine Spirit on the mind, possessed and enjoyed by man, shall come to him through the instrumentality of his fellows. The truth perceived first by one becomes the property of millions ; the delight, first felt in a single breast, is communicated by sympathy, and thrills through a thousand bosoms. A great man lends a voice to the hills and adds a music to the streams : he looks on the sea, and it becomes more calmly beautiful, on the clouds and they are more radiantly touched : he becomes a priest of the mysteries, a dispenser of the charities, of nature, and men call him poet. Ruskin stands among a select and honored few, who have thus interpreted nature's meaning, and conveyed her bounty to mankind. He has spoken with a voice of power, of those pictures, which ever change yet are ever new, which are old yet not dimmed or defaced, of the beauty of which

all Art is an acknowledgment, of the admiration of which all Art is the result, but which, having hung in our view since childhood, we are apt to pass lightly by. He has reminded us that Morning, rosy-fingered as in the days of Homer, has yet a new and distinct smile at each arising, and that, as she steps along the ocean, its foam is always wreathed into new broderies of gold and roses. He has shown us, by evidence which none can resist, that no true lover ever trysted with Spring, by her own fountains or in her own woods, without seeing some beauty never seen before. At his bidding, we awake to a new consciousness of the beauty and grandeur of the world. We have more distinct ideas as to what it is ; we know better how to look for it. Summer has for us a new opulence and pride ; Autumn, which is Summer meeting death with a smile, a new solemnity and a more noble sadness. Even to Winter we learn to look for his part in nature's pageantry, in nature's orchestral beauty ; we find a new music in his storms, a new majesty in his cataracts, a more exquisite pencilling in his frost-work. Artists and artist-critics may rail at Ruskin as they please ; but in order to prove his word-painting a small matter, they must prove that Richter's most wonderful passages are mean achievements, that Shelley and Wordsworth, in their moments of richest inspiration, wrote what was "more easy than is supposed," and that those descriptive passages which are the masterpieces of Byron are of small account. We do not call Ruskin a poet. The name, we hold, cannot be claimed unless the distinctive form of poetry, the metrical, has been adhered to. But in the elements of descriptive power, which underlie the garb, either of prose or verse, we have no hesitation in declaring that, with the exception of one or two of Byron's highest efforts, such as his description of the storm in the Alps, the

boasted and magnificent descriptions of that poet are decidedly inferior to those of Ruskin. Such a series of descriptions, indeed, as Ruskin's, does not, in prose or verse, exist in the English language, or, we are assured, in any other. The value of Ruskin's Art-criticism, we have yet to determine: but it at least must be conceded, that he who has added to our knowledge of nature, to an extent which would have given him high standing as a man of science, and who has irradiated nature by his imaginative power, in a manner which entitles him, in all but the form of his works, to take rank with the greatest descriptive poets that ever lived, is a man of rare and precious genius.

But it is time that we left this wider field, and addressed ourselves to the strict inquiry, how the marvellous natural sensibility of Ruskin has availed him in treating of the theory and practice of Art. We shall confine ourselves, almost entirely, to an investigation of his opinions on painting.

There are two points of view, by taking which successively, it will be possible to obtain a fair and dispassionate idea of Ruskin's opinions on pictorial Art. The first is by considering his great work, *Modern Painters*; the second, by glancing generally at the way he has applied his principles to the criticism of individual artists and schools.

It is of importance, particularly in view of the assaults which have been made upon Ruskin as an Art-critic, that we exhibit his fundamental ideas, as little as may be in our words, and as much as our limits permit in his.

In the very outset of Ruskin's first volume, we find him speaking thus:—

“Painting, or Art generally, as such, with all its technicalities, difficulties, and particular ends, is nothing but a noble and expressive language, invaluable as the vehicle of

thought, but by itself nothing. He who has learned what is commonly considered the whole art of painting, that is, the art of representing any natural object faithfully, has as yet only learned the language by which his thoughts are to be expressed. He has done just as much towards being that which we ought to respect as a great painter, as a man who has learned how to express himself grammatically and melodiously has towards being a great poet. The language is, indeed, more difficult of acquirement in the one case than in the other, and possesses more power of delighting the sense, while it speaks to the intellect; but it is, nevertheless, nothing more than language, and all those excellences which are peculiar to the painter as such, are merely what rhythm, melody, precision, and force are in the words of the orator and the poet, necessary to their greatness, but not the tests of their greatness. It is not by the mode of representing and saying, but by what is represented and said, that the respective greatness either of the painter or the writer is to be finally determined."

The nature of Ruskin's system of criticism will manifestly depend upon the meaning he attaches to the "thought" and the "language" here spoken of. It is indispensable, therefore, to ascertain that meaning with certainty and precision. The illustration by which the author explains the passage is first of all worthy of attention.

"Take, for instance, one of the most perfect poems or pictures (I use the word as synonymous) which modern times have seen:—the 'Old Shepherd's Chief-mourner.' Here the exquisite execution of the glossy and crisp hair of the dog, the bright sharp touching of the green bough beside it, the clear painting of the wood of the coffin and the folds of the blanket, are language—language clear and

expressive in the highest degree. But the close pressure of the dog's breast against the wood, the convulsive clinging of the paws, which has dragged the blanket off the trestle, the total powerlessness of the head laid close and motionless, upon its folds, the fixed and tearful fall of the eye in its utter hopelessness, the rigidity of repose which marks that there has been no motion nor change in the trance of agony since the last blow was struck on the coffin lid, the quietness and gloom of the chamber, the spectacles marking the place where the Bible was last closed, indicating how lonely has been the life—how unwatched the departure, of him who is now laid solitary in his sleep;—these are all thoughts,—thoughts by which the picture is separated at once from hundreds of equal merit, as far as mere painting goes, by which it ranks as a work of high art, and stamps its author, not as the neat imitator of the texture of a skin, or the fold of a drapery, but as the **Man of Mind**."

It is just possible that one might be so ignorant of the nature and philosophy of language, as to mistake the meaning of this explicit and satisfactory passage. There may be men, and they may even write in the *Quarterly*, who can find something to bewilder them in the description of the "wood of the coffin and of the folds of the blanket" as "language—language clear and expressive in the highest degree," and who can evince their astonishment by inquiring "what, after all, does such painting express, but hair, wood, and wool?" But it is not necessary to suppose men in general unable to perceive, that it is just this fact of their being hair, wood, and wool, in visible, pictorial representation, and not the alphabetical characters which are used to express these things, by cultivated reviewers, that makes them a language. Were the daguerreotype to be perfected so as to give the color as well as the form

of nature, it would render nature's language perfectly. It could not, of course, do so, without giving nature's meaning too, whether deep and solemn, as in mountain scenery, commonplace, as in a street, or trivial, as in a heap of rubbish or a Dutch kitchen. But only in its application by mind, in its application to nature's scenes of exceeding grandeur, or to passages of human history of pathos and significance, could it produce pictures really great, full of meaning and thought. A perfect daguerreotype would render a barber's shop or haystack, as well as a mountain gorge lit by its cataract, or an army reposing under the sinking sun after a hard-fought day. The language in each of these cases would be alike faultless; and if an erudite critic were to slip into the assertion that the language of painting "is in itself *everything*," he would have slipped into the declaration that the two former pictures would be as noble as the two latter. Even with your perfect daguerreotype you must know how to apply it before you have valuable pictures; and even its best application would not give the highest Art; nay, the mind of a great painter will do, without a daguerreotype, what a man of no genius could never do with it.

But there is another point which this illustration makes clear. If it were the duty of a critic, professing to stand between the public and an author, and to declare plainly and honestly what the latter means, to fix upon a word, and attempt, with it, to nail his author down to a certain meaning or no-meaning, there might be defence set up for one who, settling on the word "thought," in the first of the passages just quoted, should "glance at the different fields of thought—moral, speculative, theoretic, poetic, epigrammatic,"\* and so lead himself and his readers a

ludicrous wild-goose chase in quest of the meaning of Ruskin. But if the duty of one who comes between the public and an author is precisely the reverse of this, how can any apology be offered for the man who, so coming, should put aside the simple and intentional explanation of Ruskin's meaning in the use of the word, which his illustration affords. The thoughts pointed out by him in Landseer's picture might be called facts, truths, touches of sentiment, proofs of observation or reflection, and so on. It is at least plain that if you inquire only after what precisely occupies "the thinking faculty," you will be led unpardonably as well as hopelessly astray. In the very quotation in which the word "thought" occurs, as that of which the painter's language is the vehicle, the expression "what is represented and said," is used as precisely equivalent. What if a critic seized the former and refused to look at the latter?

But there is more still to be said on this point. Ruskin is a somewhat voluminous writer, and it might be fair, always supposing that you did not wish to gratify a pitiable malignity but to perform a duty to the public, to proceed beyond one or two of his pages, and endeavor to discover whether subsequent declarations do not cast light upon those previously made. The previous quotations are important to an intelligence of Ruskin's meaning, but the following, and one or two others, are also of essential moment. He thus defines greatness in pictures:—

"The greatest picture is that which conveys to the mind of the spectator the greatest number of the greatest ideas." This expression is met with in the same important initiatory chapter from which we made the former quotations. It is difficult to imagine a mistake as to the identity of meaning between the words "thought" in the one case, and "ideas" in the other. And if the author had first categorically

stated what the ideas which he looked for in pictures were, and then devoted two volumes to the detailed illustration and exposition of them, would not a distinguished reviewer look very foolishly pompous, in taking that sublime "glance at the different fields of thought — moral, speculative, theoretic, poetic, epigrammatic," when, all the time, the information needed lay at his feet? The distinguished reviewer, endangering the stars with his sublime head, would, we imagine, have fallen into a well! The question is one of simple fact. If what we state can be proved in Ruskin's words, surely the reviewer's position is somewhat ridiculous, surely his academic robes are somewhat draggled.

What, then, are the ideas which Mr. Ruskin looks for in Art? It is perhaps unfortunate that he has used the word "number" in precisely the connection in which it appears; for it affords a color, if no more, to quibbling. Candid criticism, however, will take it for granted, that the ideas he desiderates, however numerous, must, in his view, combine in one unity. Where unity is secured, where the ideas own the sway of one imperial thought, it is most true that the greater their number, the greater the picture is.

Mr. Ruskin proceeds to classify his Ideas as follows: we invite readers to consider whether the sentences, with which he introduces the classification, are calculated to mislead a candid critic, or to remove any misconception which might have been already formed.

"The definition of Art," these are his words, "which I have just given requires me to determine what kinds of ideas can be received from works of Art, and which of these are the greatest, before proceeding to any practical application of the test."

"I think that all the sources of pleasure, or of any other

good, to be derived from works of Art, may be referred to five distinct heads.

“I. Ideas of Power.—The perception or conception of the mental or bodily powers by which the work has been produced.

“II. Ideas of Imitation.—The perception that the thing produced resembles something else.

“III. Ideas of Truth.—The perception of faithfulness in a statement of facts by the thing produced.

“IV. Ideas of Beauty.—The perception of beauty, either in the thing produced, or in what it suggests or resembles.

“V. Ideas of Relation.—The perception of intellectual relations in the thing produced, or in what it suggests or resembles.”

It may be maintained that certain of these classes might be merged in each other, and a different mode of statement might by some be desired. But we think that if any one deliberately and carefully peruses the volumes, in which Mr. Ruskin has, so far, explained and illustrated the category, he can hardly fail to acknowledge that it is radically correct, and that it furnishes the groundwork of a complete system of Art-criticism. The first class is one with which all are familiar, who have the slightest acquaintance with critical opinion, or who have at all reflected on the mode in which the efforts of man are pleasing to his fellows. The second and third classes might not, perhaps, have been kept asunder, but represented as differing rather in relation of degree, in inferiority or superiority, than in essential nature. The difference, however, as Mr. Ruskin explains it, is by no means shadowy, the delight in imitation being confined to the mere pleasant illusion of the senses, while the delight in truth can extend to the most sublime facts, both

of physical nature and of human feeling. To the discussion of the Ideas of Beauty, the whole of the second volume of *Modern Painters* is, more or less directly, devoted. The Ideas of Relation comprehend "all those conveyable by Art, which are the subjects of distinct intellectual perception and action, and which are therefore worthy of the name of thoughts." "Under this head," we are informed further, "must be arranged everything productive of expression, sentiment, and character, whether in figures or landscapes," and it especially includes the highest human interest.

It must be carefully noticed that the part of the whole work, *Modern Painters*, in which the Ideas of Relation would have come to be discussed and illustrated, has not yet appeared, and may perhaps never appear. After a comparatively brief investigation of the Ideas of Power and of Imitation, the whole of the first volume was devoted to the Ideas of Truth. In this portion of the work was displayed that marvellous acquaintance with the facts of nature, of which we have already spoken. After the Ideas of Truth came the Ideas of Beauty, constituting Part III., and theoretically treated of in the second volume. In it is drawn out that noble theory, which affirms, of all inherent beauty, that it is typical of the Divine attributes; a theory of which the metaphysical profundity may be found to be as remarkable, as the celestial purity of religious feeling, and the mellow splendor of eloquence, with which it is explained. Then there was a pause. The symmetrical completion of the work required either that the manifestation of the Ideas of Beauty, in Art and in nature, should be traced, with a fullness corresponding to that with which the Ideas of Truth had been exhibited, — a proceeding, we suspect, anticipated in the first volume,

— or that the Ideas of Relation should be at once taken up. But volume third, consummate as was the power it displayed, proved, in relation to the outlined scheme of the book, an episode. It took up “many things,” not expressly the Ideas of Relation. Nor has the fourth volume returned to the subject. It treats of “Mountain Beauty,” which might, in great measure, be styled Mountain Truth, and a remark about “changes” which have been permitted “in the arrangement of the book,” though breaking the “symmetrical continuation” of the previous volumes, renders one apprehensive that the original plan has been lost sight of, and that the Ideas of Relation will never be expressly taken up.

We confess that this seems to us matter for regret. In the first place, Mr. Ruskin himself distinctly declares these ideas to be the most important with which Art can be conversant. If he neglects their formal treatment, it may be very plausibly urged that he has condemned himself. In the next place, a thorough discussion of these ideas, and the accordance of a due prominence to the human interest with which they are conspicuously allied, might remove a charge which even able and candid critics may bring against Mr. Ruskin. After the pretentious feebleness of the *Quarterly*, the insolence of the *Edinburgh*, and the baseness of *Blackwood*, the critique of Ruskin which appeared in the *National Review* was refreshing and delightful. The writer perceived one half of Ruskin’s greatness. He acknowledged his unequalled acquaintance with nature. But he denied him a due, or at least a correspondent measure of human sympathy. He honestly conceived him to love trees and mountains better than men. The mistake, indeed, even in the present state of Ruskin’s works, could hardly have failed to yield to a sufficiently careful examina-

tion. The chapter on the functions of the Workman in Art in *The Stones of Venice*, the chapter on Vital Beauty in man, and that on Mountain Gloom, both in *Modern Painters*, much of the criticism in the Exhibition Pamphlets, and the whole tenor, indicated in a thousand expressions, of his works, conclusively evince that his heart beats with human sympathy as powerfully, as his senses are acute in the perception of beauty. Had Ruskin's energies been early directed into a different channel, he might have been a profound and sagacious writer on political or social subjects. But such a critic as the National reviewer could not have fallen into the mistake of supposing him open only to impressions of natural beauty, if, in the discussion of Ideas of Relation, he had balanced his treatment of natural beauty by a proportionate investigation of the human element in Art.

We are prevented by the narrowness of our limits, from following Mr. Ruskin in the detailed treatment of the various ideas of Art. It is hardly necessary that we should do so. All we have already said of his descriptions of natural appearance may be taken as declarative of what he has done in discussing the Ideas of Truth. His theory of Beauty, That, so far as it is inherent, it is typical of the Divine attributes, and, so far as it is not inherent, it consists in felicitous performance of vital functions, would require a separate critique. How the first half of the theory can be rejected we hardly see, except to suit an atheistic scheme of things. But whether the elements of the Beautiful do, or do not, typify the Divine attributes, it is at least true that suggestion of infinity, that unity, repose, symmetry, purity, and moderation are characteristics of beauty in Art. However, therefore, you may choose to apply it, the classification of these characteristics is neither vague, fanciful, nor devoid of strict practical value.

Though not professing to subscribe to every one of Ruskin's theoretic opinions, we yet believe him, and think we have at least indicated grounds for believing him, a comprehensive and scientific theorist in Art. But all theories are in some sense but moulds into which the metal of fact is run; and it is an evidence of the preciousness of this metal, that it can be melted from its old appearance and run into new dyes, yet retain its inherent value. Mr. Ruskin was gifted with the power of seeing new truth in nature, and if he has given us that truth he has done a substantial work. His theories may go, his facts cannot. Believing his theories to stand, in the substance of them, stably on facts, we are satisfied that they too will endure. But we have still to glance at him, engaged in the work of practical criticism, when, his theories aside, he brings his living force to solve the artistic problems, to judge the artistic phenomena, of his time. Do we find soundness or unsoundness, consistency or inconsistency, here?

Within the compass of that classification which we have quoted, there was range enough for diversity, both in degree, and nature, of power. Between the ideas of imitation and the ideas of highest truth and relation, there was room for drudging accuracy and for poetic invention. In his treatment of schools and artists, Mr. Ruskin has acted in accordance with a theory thus all-embracing. He has recognized the smallest molehill of real worth: he has ascended to the Himalayas of colossal power. Since, however, many men, who feel angry if you did not count them clever, can perceive consistency in the straightness of a lamp-post, but not in the strong stem, dividing branches, and delicate foliage of a living tree, there have been critics without end to pronounce Ruskin inconsistent.

Ruskin's practical criticism, in its true nature and essen-

tial consistency, can be amply and pointedly illustrated, by a single antithetic illustration: his opinion of Turner in contrast or coincidence with his opinion of the pre-Raphaelites.

Within the first thirty pages which Ruskin ever gave to the world, marked applause was accorded to a piece of pure idealization, a touch of highest poetry, from the pencil of Turner. In the fourth volume of *Modern Painters*, large space is devoted to a consideration of the distinctively poetic, the creative, imagination, of that painter. The imaginative power, which summons before the eye of its possessor, as if in vision or dream, forms and colors having no actual existence, but combining in a beauty higher than that of external nature, is there distinctly contemplated; an attempt even is made,—no one but Ruskin could have dared it,—to enter, if we may so speak, the chambers of Turner's mind, and to watch his conceptions coming together. Explicit acknowledgment is thus made, of the reality of the highest imaginative exertion, and it is set in the seat of supreme artistic honor. You must state facts very minutely in order to meet such critics as Ruskin's; else why should we make these references at all? Is not Ruskin most of all distinguished as the expositor and eulogist of Turner, and is not Turner the greatest landscape *poet* that ever used a brush? No painter ever so daringly magnified nature's forms, none ever arranged them anew so superbly in novel combinations, as Turner. It is evident, therefore, that Ruskin acknowledges, and with emphasis, that highest excellence in Art, which we may variously designate as the poetic, the ideal, the creative.

Shortly after the appearance of the first volume of *Modern Painters*, there began to attract attention a re-

markable and original school of painting. It obtained the name of the pre-Raphaelite school, from professing the belief, that a pernicious conventionalism in Art dated from the time of Raphael. On its banner, it inscribed the word, Nature. The most conspicuous characteristic of its handling was a daring, uncompromising realism, and the most relentless of its realists was Everard Millais. The newspaper wits were in a state of excitement and commotion. The young painters were pronounced a set of miserable imitators, who could do nothing better than trace cracks in brick walls, make you believe you saw a bundle of hay within a picture frame, and perform despicable little bits of trickery with feathers and hairs. The general public was offended and repelled. The broad and distant horizon, the free sunlight, the pleasing sweeps of cloud, the balanced masses of foliage, the regulated harmony of color, all of which had been confidently looked for in a picture, were, in the pre-Raphaelite paintings, looked for in vain. The brethren would give you only what they could see, so closely and so continuously, that they could paint it line by line and tint by tint. No flowing cloud, no undulating horizon, no breadth of woodland, had you here. You were compelled to cramp yourself into the corner of a room, to concentrate your attention on briars and twining roots in the smallest nook of the dell, to be happy if you got a bit of garden wall with the least possible modicum, straight, level, uninteresting, of cloud. All this was intolerable. But one thing seemed clear:—Ruskin, the unbounded admirer of Turner, the exultant defender of him who gave more of sky and horizon than any painter known to Art, would join the public and the connoisseurs, in scourging these presumptuous youths into summary oblivion. Such, as we trust it is not unbecoming

to state, were precisely our own first impressions as to the relation which must subsist between Ruskin and the pre-Raphaelites. We were fresh from *Modern Painters*, and the intense gratification the work had afforded to our love of nature had inspired us with ardor in the study of Art. With its exaltation of poetic thought over skilful execution, we had heartily sympathized. Cordially, if not very intelligently, had we agreed that the Flemish school might be "left in peace to count the spicula of haystacks and the hairs of donkeys." With unfeigned astonishment and perplexity, we heard that Ruskin defended the pre-Raphaelites. We were at fault. If Ruskin admired bareness, narrowness, ugliness, we thought we must have strangely misapprehended his words. The simple and honest course to pursue was, to read Mr. Ruskin's own pamphlet on the subject. We did so: and had not proceeded far when we perceived, that our perplexity originated in partial knowledge of Ruskin, and in still more partial knowledge of the pre-Raphaelites. All that particularly offended us in the pictures of the latter was, in itself, displeasing to Ruskin. For narrowness, littleness, ugliness, in themselves, he had no defence. But beneath all these, he discerned a devotion, not selfish, not conceited, but pure and manly, to nature. He saw that the dexterities of the pre-Raphaelites were not performed for their own sakes, but in determined adherence to fact. He saw that the brothers were on the right *way*, and he proclaimed it. He met our every objection in a manner more precise and explicit than we could have pointed out, by bringing together and comparing Turner and Millais. In the one, there was the eye of an eagle and the soul of a poet; the other had an eye like a microscope and cultivated unflinching realism: but both, as students of Art, sat at the feet of Nature. The pre-Rapha-

elites, Ruskin distinctly asserted, were yet but scholars. They were parted from Turner by a lifetime of study, such as few men ever had passed through, and by possession of genius, such as appears once in ages: but where Turner had learned his highest lessons, they had also gone to learn. It was plain that Ruskin was perfectly consistent; and a more accurate acquaintance with pre-Raphaelite *principles*, aided by a more careful consideration of Ruskin's words, could hardly have failed, even without his own explanation, to exhibit that consistency. For, in the first volume of *Modern Painters*, occurred the following passage. As one peruses it he cannot help asking in amazement, why, whenever Ruskin addresses *young* painters, young whether in years or in faculty, he is assailed as if he were addressing old, and why, whenever he praises the works of genius fully developed, he is accused of inconsistency for not *similarly* praising the works of beginners.

"From young artists," said Ruskin long ago, "nothing ought to be tolerated but simple *bona fide imitation* of nature. They have no business to ape the execution of masters; to utter weak and disjointed repetitions of other men's words, and mimic the gestures of the preacher, without understanding his meaning or sharing in his emotions. We do not want their crude ideas of composition, their unformed conceptions of the Beautiful, their unsystematized experiments upon the sublime. We scorn their velocity; for it is without direction: we reject their decision; for it is without grounds: we contemn their composition; for it is without materials: we reprobate their choice; for it is without comparison. Their duty is neither to choose, nor compose, nor imagine, nor experimentalize; but to be humble and earnest in following the steps of nature, and tracing the finger of God. Nothing is so bad a symptom,

in the work of young artists, as too much dexterity of handling ; for it is a sign that they are satisfied with their work, and have tried to do nothing more than they were able to do. Their work should be full of failures ; for these are the signs of efforts. They should keep to quiet colors, grays and browns ; and, making the earlier works of Turner their example, as his latest are to be their object and emulation, should go to nature with all singleness of heart, and walk with her laboriously and trustingly, having no other thoughts but how best to penetrate her meaning, and remember her instruction ; rejecting nothing, selecting nothing, and scorning nothing ; believing all things to be right and good, and rejoicing always in the truth. Then, when their memories are stored, and their imaginations fed, and their hands firm, let them take up the scarlet and the gold, give the reins to their fancy, and show us what their heads are made of. We will follow them wherever they choose to lead ; we will check at nothing ; they are then our masters, and are fit to be so. They have placed themselves above our criticism, and we will listen to their words in all faith and humility ; but not unless they themselves have before bowed, in the same submission, to a higher Authority and Master."

The man who thus recognizes every order of excellence, from Turnerism to pre-Raphaelitism, must be substantially sound as a critic of Art. As we listen to his commendations of realism, we have only to inquire whether, as an *Art-education*, nature ought to be paramount or not ? It need scarcely be added, that, though Ruskin denounces artistic slavery to any master, his whole exposition and vindication of Turner evince that he can joyfully learn from all masters, so far as they are interpreters of nature, or exhibit true thought and emotion. He will gladly take the hand of

Raphael to lead him to those fields of study where Raphael learned to be what he was; he will earnestly strive to enter into the moods of mind in which Raphael conceived or executed: but he will not stand close up to the canvas of Raphael, letting it shut out the light of heaven and the loveliness of earth, and *steal* from him the thoughts and facts which nature gave to him alone.

Has Ruskin's criticism of individual artists, pre-Raphaelite or other, corresponded with the view we have just taken, the facts we have just adduced? Has he neglected to inform the pre-Raphaelites of their failings, to shake them out of their crotchets? Has he shunned to make such a remark as that the painting of truthful ugliness is the "Nemesis of pre-Raphaelitism," indefensible in itself, though to be laid at the door of those who goaded the pre-Raphaelites into fractiousness? Has he refused to acknowledge diverse excellence, to turn from the crystal transparency, and outline sharp as a knife-edge, of John Lewis, to the pouring skies and matted herbage of David Cox, bestowing words of ardent commendation on both? Has he overlooked the tender feeling hiding behind imperfect execution in the pictures of Hook, because he prizes the rugged facts of Millais? He does not praise now as he praised Turner: he waits until a Turner rise.

The Dutch school may deserve one other word. Mr. Ruskin's willingness to consign all its productions to an *auto da fe* looks at first singular. Were the expressions he has used regarding it unqualified by the context and by the rest of his works, they might admit of no defence. The Dutch painters deserve deep respect as accurate narrators of fact, and as honestly representative of a national character. But considered in connection with the whole aim and development of Art, the Dutch school is without hesitation

to be condemned. With all his admiration for artistic truth, Ruskin's Art-instinct is far too sound to permit him to forget that the end of Art is beauty, that her eye is ever upwards. The Dutch artists, with the exceptions he expressly makes, Rubens, Vandyke, Rembrandt, *rested* in their work. They did not press up and up, until the light of common day paled in the higher imaginative radiance never seen on sea or shore. The tendency of a devoted study of their works might be to prevent artists from thus perpetually going on. They were a pre-Raphaelite school struck, at a certain point, with blindness. Had Ruskin wholly approved them, his admiration of pre-Raphaelitism would have been a sanction of its crudities, not a hope for its perfection, and his praise of Turner, not the pinnacle of a symmetrical building, but a contradiction. Thus, as is always the case, a real consistency is most triumphantly vindicated in and through an apparent inconsistency.

One thing Ruskin has always condemned without qualification, and, besides of course, pure falsehood and slovenliness, it alone : The *manufacture* of poetry in form and color, the production of great pictures by conventional rules. No attempt to ape genius can either escape or propitiate him : a thousand academies, chanting the praises of cultured and pretentious mediocrity, would not daunt him in his assault upon it.

It has been objected to Ruskin, and, not perhaps so inappropriately as may appear, by one who proclaims that in the application of his intellectual powers there is "not one single great moral quality," that he forces upon Art a moral responsibility. An unbiased consideration of Mr. Ruskin's own words shows that he demands of landscape Art what he finds in nature, a tendency, namely, to awaken certain great and elevating ideas. A man of religion, a Christian,

finds that all such ideas lead him up towards his Father in heaven, and Ruskin, being thus led in nature, has to deplore the twofold fact, that ancient Art does not so lead him, and that Art in general has hitherto exhibited no power of so leading men. He demands, in Art, earnestness, simplicity, truthfulness, humility, knowing that, when the heart is rightly strung, it will, by these, be turned in the direction of Him who is the source of all such good gifts. The idea of turning all Art into allegory, or of contriving landscapes to suggest ethical doctrines or moral maxims, would be to him as abhorrent, as the idea of graving wise saws on the rocks, or pasting the trees with good advice from the copy books. Yet we should omit a characteristic, without a consideration of which it is impossible to form a comprehension of Ruskin's mind and writings, if we did not take into account his religious earnestness, his Christian piety. Of this he cannot divest himself: if Art required him to divest himself of it, he would abandon Art. Whether the reality and depth of his Christianity have affected the soundness of his artistic views, the reader must now judge for himself. There was no reason why they should have done so and they have not. On the other hand, they have led him into regions of pure and beautiful thought, little known to critics; they have cast over his whole works a softened yet steady-beaming glory, a benign and tranquil splendor; they have caused to break out, ever and anon, as it were tones of music, which waft you gently upwards, leaving material beauty for spiritual, the things of earth for the things of heaven. He has, as we saw, shown that Poetry and Science, though different, are Sisters; and as he shows them they are looking towards God for his light to fall upon both. Therefore it is that the works of Ruskin stand apart from all that has ever been written on Art. They

connect themselves with what is greatest and holiest in human duty and devotion, with what is most solemn and benign in the ways of God to man. The following passage may illustrate these remarks. The author has been considering the characteristic of repose in works of Art. In accordance with his uniform method of broadly human treatment, he traces the nobleness of the quality in its highest manifestations :—

“ But that which in lifeless things ennobles them by seeming to indicate life, ennobles higher creatures by indicating the exaltation of their earthly vitality into a Divine vitality ; and raising the life of sense into the life of faith : faith, whether we receive it in the sense of adherence to resolution, obedience to law, regardfulness of promise, in which from all time it has been the test, as the shield of the true being and life of man ; or in the still higher sense of trustfulness in the presence, kindness, and word of God, in which form it has been exhibited under the Christian dispensation ; for, whether in one or other form — whether the faithfulness of men whose path is chosen and portion fixed, in the following and receiving of that path and portion, as in the Thermopylæ camp, or the happier faithfulness of children in the good giving of their Father, and of subjects in the conduct of their King, as in the ‘ Stand still and see the salvation of God ’ of the Red Sea shore — there is rest and peacefulness, the ‘ standing still ’ in both, the quietness of action determined, of spirit unalarmed, of expectation unimpatient : beautiful even when based only, as of old, on the self-command and self-possession, the persistent dignity or the uncalculating love of the creature ; but more beautiful yet, when the rest is one of humility, instead of pride, and the trust no more in the resolution we have taken, but in the hand we hold.”

Mr. Ruskin's writings afford three or four instances of slips in reasoning, so manifest and so avoidable, that they seem intentionally thrown in the way of those critics who will always insist upon forming the estimate of a field of wheat from its half-dozen bad ears. Thus, in one place, an appeal on behalf of the decaying monuments of architectural Art is founded on an analogy between wasting one's own time and wasting that of one's ancestors. This is an argument which one cares not to answer. Logic is unnecessary in the case ;—formal logic, indeed, as Mr. Macaulay, and we suppose multitudes before Mr. Macaulay, remarked long ago, is not used in the thinking operations of any man ;—the intuitive sense of every one simply rejects it. If, however, it had to be explicitly shown to be unsound, the task could be performed in a moment. You do not waste your own time, first, because it may be turned to account by yourself, because it is of value to you, second, because you are responsible for it. But a dead man has had all the value out of his time that he can have : and death has forever closed his account of responsibility. A man's fame may be filched from him after his death ; but would you call destroying a man's renown synonymous with wasting his time ? Whether there is any conceivable sense in which a living man can waste a dead man's time is doubtful, or rather not doubtful ; but no human reason, unless nodding, will recognize a parallel between wasting your own time when alive, and wasting your father's when he is dead. With the object in furtherance of which Mr. Ruskin adduced this strange argument, we cordially sympathize. Again, in a volume very recently published, Mr. Ruskin declares his preference for drawing, as a part of the education of children, to writing. No one, he argues, can draw without benefitting himself and his fellows ; few can write,

without doing no good,—if we remember correctly his language is even stronger,—to either. Of the extreme usefulness of drawing, considered educationally, we are convinced. But to compare it with that art by which human feeling is, in absence, all communicated, and which must be regarded, side by side with reading, as one of those great pillars on which all education rests, and to which all education is secondary, is to propound an obvious paradox. Next, and here a better show of defence can be made, Mr. Ruskin, immediately after declaring it “probable” that “the critical and executive faculties are in great part independent of each other,” allows himself to assert, that “a certain power of drawing is *indispensable* to the critic of Art.” Had any word but “*indispensable*” been here used, it might have passed. But this word puts in peril the vital principle involved in the very nature of Art, and without the clear acknowledgment of which we believe dilettantism can never be destroyed or even met, that its effect is totally independent of its methods of production. It is not an easy thing to be able to form a correct judgment on works of Art. The power is in proportion to the accuracy and width of knowledge, possessed of man and nature; and such knowledge, if we inquire, is seldom either accurate or wide. To give precision to observations made by the senses, the power of drawing cannot perhaps be exaggerated. But it is only by enabling one to know nature, that drawing assists him in judging of Art. If the faculty of observation is naturally so acute, and has been so heedfully exercised, that it cannot be deceived as to the form or hue of clouds or foliage, as to the aspects of passion or the lines of thought, it qualifies its possessor to be a critic in Art. Do you require to know the mysterious properties by which the sunbeams and the metal produced the likeness,

in order to say whether the daguerreotype has succeeded in rendering the features of your friend? To say that one must be able to draw in order to judge of Painting is to say that, in order to judge of Poetry, one must not only be able to read, must not only have the power of placing its visions before his eyes, but must be able to versify. A fourth instance of inadvertency is found in Mr. Ruskin's sharp attack upon Macaulay, for having, in his essay upon Moore's Life of Byron, spoken in a sneering tone of the pictures of Paradise in old Bibles. The point which cannot fail to strike every reader is, that Mr. Macaulay did not consider these pictures at all in their symbolic significance, that he contrasted them, as delineations of an actual Paradise, with delineations true to nature, and that, so contrasting them, he pronounced them, as Mr. Ruskin doubtless would, absurd. The circumstance that Macaulay spoke of the sets of pictures solely in illustration, both made it legitimate for him to place them in any opposition he chose, and put it out of the question that he should contemplate the deliberate condemnation of either. You may say that a bishop's mitre, considered as a mere covering for the head, is absurd in comparison with a wide-awake; but you would not therefore speak disrespectfully of the mitre. Once more, Mr. Ruskin has assailed, with a violence the less defensible that it is incidental, "metaphysicians and philosophers." These "are, on the whole, the greatest troubles the world has got to deal with." The metaphysician or philosopher is specially defined to be "an affected Thinker, who supposes his thinking of any other importance than as it tends to work." If Mr. Ruskin will accept a definition of work in accordance with his own noble doctrine of utility, laid down in the commencement of the second volume of *Modern Painters*, we shall agree with him in

denouncing all such persons as these. But we have yet to learn that Kant was a less practical thinker than Plato, or that Plato was less a metaphysician than Kant; while we look in vain for affected thinkers among the Fichtes and Hamiltons of recent times. If Mr. Ruskin had given the names of those whom he advises prudent people to brush out of their way "like spiders," we might have agreed with him or we might not. But his words will be understood as, on the whole, deprecating the study of metaphysics, and as such we regret them. It would of course be absurd to enter here upon a eulogium or defence of the most sublime studies, theology excepted, in which the intellect of man can be engaged: but why should Mr. Ruskin thus gratuitously strive to alienate that audience, which, of all others, is most fitted to learn of him, and of which it is the highest compliment that we can pay him to say that he is worthy to be the teacher?

A few more instances of unwariness or inaccuracy might be culled from Mr. Ruskin's works. But considering the voluminousness of his writings, it is altogether absurd to view them in any other light than that in which we regard the noddings of Homer, or the grammatical and geographical slips of Shakspeare. They are, for one thing; utterly insufficient to furnish an excuse for the manner in which critics have treated Ruskin. We deliberately assert that several of these have earned the just indignation of Ruskin's audience, that is, of the educated world. The writer in the *Quarterly* whose absolute blindness to the whole meaning of Ruskin in his system of criticism, we think we have already shown, and who is understood to be no less imposing a personage than Sir Charles Eastlake, not only says that his intellectual qualities are guided by no moral principle whatever, that the truth of his conclusions

is to him "no object in the process of reasoning," but adds that "his writings have all the qualities of premature old age—its coldness, callousness, and contraction." It is our firm belief that there is not, in the whole range of literature, an expression more amazing, more incomprehensible, than this last. We do not answer it: certainly not. We only request readers, first to read any volume or any page of Ruskin's, and then to ponder, one by one, the words,—coldness,—callousness,—contraction,—as a description of the author's spirit. But the charge of want of controlling principle, of regardlessness of truth in conclusions, amounts to a charge of utter falsity; if our verdict is affirmative, we convict Mr. Ruskin of being, not only a scoundrel, but a scoundrel of the deepest dye, at once false and hypocritical. If all Mr. Ruskin has ever alleged against living artists were concentrated into one thunderbolt, it would fall like a rocket compared with this. To make such an accusation without ample and indubitable proof was surely to run the risk of being excluded from all honorable society. And what is Sir Charles's proof? Why, in the first place, we hear of Ruskin's "revilings of all that is most sacred in the past, and his insults to all who are most sensitive in the present." This about reviling the sacred past is, let us plainly say, insufferable driveling. Ruskin feels, and has expressly said, that the dead can be pained by no criticism; and it is an insult to common sense, to call in question a man's moral integrity, because he rubs the gilt from ancient names. As for insults to the living, the reference is, no doubt, chiefly to the pamphlets on the Academy Exhibitions. It so happens that we agree with nearly every word of the first of these, which alone could be charged with severity, and with no word of it more cordially, according to our humble capacity, than that which condemns Sir Charles Eastlake's

insipid and mawkish Beatrice. There is nothing in the pamphlet which a gentleman might not have written, and which gentlemen might not accept. It may perhaps be, that artists in general will not thank the president, for leading us to believe, that they all take to whimpering, when Ruskin, never casting a shadow of reflection on their moral qualities, points boldly and bluntly out their artistic shortcomings. But there is another department of proof, by which Sir Charles would establish Mr. Ruskin's complete moral worthlessness. He quotes several of those expressions in which the latter reflects on the want of faith exhibited, as he believes, at the present time, in the inanity of fashionable amusements, and such things, and we are to take these expressions as satisfactory evidence of "malice, bitterness, and uncharitableness." Readers must refer to pp. 405, 406, vol. 196, of the *Quarterly Review* for this extraordinary passage. It is Sir Charles's last daring attempt to set reason, sense, and even credibility, at defiance. We shall not ask whether there may be reasons for attacking the faithless, frivolous and selfish, besides malice, bitterness and uncharitableness. Nor is it worth while to ask the honorable Sir Charles why he has not seen fit to quote, say, the appeals made by Ruskin on behalf of the Swiss peasants, as well as the attacks on the follies of London. But is it not delightful to figure the indignation of this virtuous president, against two such moral monsters as Mr. Carlyle and Mr. Thackeray? By bringing so grave and definite a charge against Mr. Ruskin, and supporting it as he has done, Sir Charles Eastlake puts himself in a position which few men would like to occupy!

The pert, penny-a-lining flippancy, with which the *Edinburgh Review* attacked Ruskin might best be treated with silent contempt. But there is one point in its article, to

which allusion may be made. The reviewer notices that autobiographical passage to which we had occasion to refer; and his mode of noticing it is a passing sneer. Now it admits of no doubt whatever, that the question as to how a critic's system is connected with his natural endowment, is always of importance; and the question is in the case of Ruskin of more express and essential moment than in any other. When you clear away all else, you find that the grand, central affirmation, which he makes in the face of the world, is, that he has brought into view a certain number of the facts of nature. From this, all his teaching branches out: on this, all his theories are, in one sense or other, based. Take from him the circumstance of having made a truthful interpretation, an authentic revelation, of nature, and you take from him everything: leave him this, and it is, as we said, impossible, on any hypothesis, that his system can be destroyed, save in the way in which a sterling currency is destroyed when it is re-stamped. This being so, it was of the last importance for the world to know that he had been pre-eminently fitted, by original endowment, for making observations upon natural appearance; and to have turned aside, when it came directly in his way to give information on the point, would have been to display an unmanly and effeminate sensitiveness. In the sneer of the Edinburgh reviewer, therefore, there was a twofold insult: to the nation, whom he pretended to instruct: to the man, whom he pretended to understand.

But perhaps neither Sir Charles Eastlake's downright accusation of malice, uncharitableness, and regardlessness of truth, in one word, of total reprobacy and worthlessness, nor the piteous frivolity of the last-mentioned imbecile, can be pronounced, on the whole, so base and beggarly, as one

of the attacks, occurring incidentally in a rambling kind of article, made upon Ruskin in *Blackwood*. The writer of course discovers indubitable inconsistency in Ruskin's works. Since, in order to know whether a system is consistent or not, you must be of sufficient mental compass to embrace it, as a whole, within your sphere of intellectual vision, we should probably have to make important modifications in the view we have presented of Ruskin and his system, if critics of a certain order did *not* find both inconsistent. Having discovered his inconsistency, the critic proceeds to account for it. Here imitation, and the finish resulting only in imitation, and both the finish and the imitation that end only in themselves, are decried; there truth is exalted, and the finish subservient to truth is praised. Over this remarkable contradiction, the expert critic brings his little lamp. He has found it! Ruskin wanted to praise when he liked and blame when he liked, according as whim or malice prompted, and so he put in two different rules, that he might use the one at one time and the other at another. The fear and dread of such terrible critics as this small ebon dwarf lay upon Ruskin, and so he contrived an elaborate trick, he uttered a deliberate lie, that he might have a weapon against them in the day of battle. We hope it was not Professor Aytoun who propounded this theory. The writers in *Blackwood* toady him so pitifully, that neither general rumor, nor internal evidence, can make you perfectly certain that an article is by him and not an imitation. By discovering what a man finds in the character or system of another, one is led with peculiar accuracy to the truth concerning the essential nature of himself. We should experience a feeling of strange and painful repulsion from the man, in whose breast there dwelt a sympathy, casting so foul and dingy a light

as this. We should really not like to be capable of making this discovery in connection with Ruskin. We should fear that there was some baseness, dark, deep-lying, insidious, nestling about our heart and polluting all its streams. Such a perception of moral taint has surely in it something of *recognition!* Professor Aytoun is indeed no poet, except so far as is implied in a certain command over that mechanical part of poetry, which Milton, speaking of Dryden, distinguished as versification ; and his character and poetry seem on the whole a very pertinent exemplification of what greatness is *not*. But he has one quality, both real and precious, which, we shall hope, rendered it impossible for him to find, in all the enthusiasm of feeling and glory of description, exhibited in the works of Ruskin, simply the paraphernalia of a small, nasty lie. Professor Aytoun possesses a talent of genial banter, all his own. It is playful yet manly, brilliant yet full of warm humor. If the vein is not so deep as Thackeray's, we suspect it is more rare. Thackeray has done nothing like *The Raid of t' Pherson*. The perception and appreciation of the two aspects of Highland character, that of this piece and that of the Cavalier ballads, shows a dramatic pliancy and amplitude of mind really fine. Professor Aytoun's banter could not be at present spared from British literature ; it is unique, and we could not supply its place. We shall hope it was not he who arrived at this theory touching Ruskin.

The whole phenomenon of the author of *Modern Painters* and his critical assailants, the mode in which they attack him and the relation in which they stand to him, is singular and anomalous. About two hundred years ago, the London theatres were ringing with the applause of the dramatists of the Restoration. Pit, boxes, gallery, coffee-house, court, echoed their renown. Meanwhile, in obloquy

and obscurity, John Milton was dictating *Paradise Lost*. Deafened by the shouts in their ears, dazzled by the glare of lamps and tinsel, the Congreves and Wycherlys knew nothing of him. The dramas of the Restoration are fast settling into that abyss of darkness, which swallows the meteors of the night and the glimmering exhalations of the fen. *Paradise Lost* is rising higher and higher above the mountain-tops of the world, still in the morning of its fame. Confident in the applause of Academies, strong in the renown of Reviews, blatant mediocrity attempts to cry down Ruskin. But he has told the world new truth, and the world will do him justice if he bide his time. Mediocrity may have it for years, but not for ages.

And he has not been without his reward. He has extended a magnificent patronage to those artists who reviled him. That is a reward which *he* can appreciate. Was not Actæon hunted by the base hounds he fed, and that because he, too, caught a glimpse of the Beautiful? But there are artists who can appreciate Ruskin; and the pre-Raphaelite School, if not his express intellectual progeny, at least conforms to his rules. A critic in the *National Review*, very different from those we have noticed, has recognized the supremacy of his knowledge of nature, and may, by more full consideration, learn that it is the accidental manifestation, rather than the real character, of his mind, which is one-sided. It has been acknowledged in the *Times* that, let artists say what they will, he first made the public really aware what a painter they had in Turner. Best of all, the young intellect of Great Britain has heard his voice, the great heart of the nation has owned the might of his genius. The clouds of conventionalism, which have brooded over Europe for centuries, have been touched by his shafts of light and must gradually disappear. He has been a recon-

eiler between Art and mankind, leading Art into the lowly paths of life, setting Art by the household fire, and astonishing men by the information, that the smile on her face is actually warm and human. Let him not hear the critics! Let him not be baited into indignation ; let him not permit his sympathies to be chilled by the companionship of contempt! Let him reveal those visions which God has given him only to see among the hills ; let him tell us, as he only can, of the streams that run among the valleys ; and let him leave to those who have candidly read him, that small vent for their gratitude, which they may find in answering his critics.

## VI.

### HUGH MILLER.

THERE is a great deal in this rough-hewn, boisterous, not very exquisitely mannered century, from which the whole class of dilettants and fine gentlemen turn aside. There has been no age in the world, and, until man radically alters there will be none, in which the guinea's stamp has not more or less drawn away men's eyes from the real gold. The nineteenth century has its own sycophancies and idolatries, its own Sir John Pauls and Barnums. But set fairly in comparison with other times, our epoch seems to be incontrovertibly distinguished by the scope it affords to real human faculty, and the willingness with which it recognizes a man when it sees him. He has now a poor chance who places his reliance upon ribands and parchment. He puts himself in an unenviable position who would now presume himself, on the strength of heraldic distinctions and well-filled purse, in a position to do honor, by the expression of his approval, or the bestowal of his company, to the man of genius who has forced his way from the ranks. Even within sixty years, a considerable advance has been made in this respect within the British Islands. There was something of the luxury of a haughty condescension, not unmixed with self-applause, in the reception of Burns by Edinburgh grandiosity at the close of

last century. There was a serene complacency in the smiling, as if it were peculiarly beautiful and praiseworthy in people so fine and lofty to encourage the really entertaining and talented ploughman. With rather an effort of kindness, they patronized their king! Alexander Smith, his birth as humble as that of Burns, and coming some sixty years after him, finds a strong figure in the loathing with which he would spurn a rich man's dole, whether, doubtless, of patronage or of pay. Tennyson, the poet of the most refined culture, sees that feudalism with all its apportionment of honor, has become a joke:—

“ Trust me, Clara Vere de Vere,  
From yon blue heaven above us bent,  
The grand old gardener and his wife  
Smile at the claims of long descent.”

The duke who would come to confer distinction on Hugh Miller, by taking his hand and showing him a little countenance, would get himself simply covered with derision. A man stands now more solely and independently on the pedestal of his individuality, than was ever the case before. And no man is in this more strikingly representative of his time than he of whom we here speak. What Hugh Miller is and has, he owes entirely to himself. In the firm, deliberate planting of his heavy step, in the quiet, wide-open determination of his eye, in the unagitated, unaffected, self-relying dignity of his whole gait and deportment, you behold the man who feels that, whatever his origin, he may, without pride or presumption, measure himself by the standard of his manhood, and so look every man, of what station soever, in the face.

Hugh Miller's education may also be pronounced if not distinctive of the nineteenth century, yet highly character-

istic of it. Theoretic education, the education of letters, is in his case rather peculiarly blended with the education of practice. He is one of the strong men who, amid the sternest toil of mechanical employment, have become acquainted, and that not cursorily and superficially but systematically and profoundly, with those stores of book-knowledge now open to all, if only they have learned to read and have natural force not to be daunted by difficulty: yet his character has derived its brawn and sinew from practice, from the rough jostling and wrestling of life. He has all along been a man of action. Born of a wild, strong, determined kindred, who seem from of old to have lived a life of "sturb and strife," and in a rank of life just sufficiently high to save him from knowing the pangs of want, the world-oyster was to him very firmly closed, but he was the kind of man to open it. Roughing it in the quarry or barrack, seizing the brief intervals of labor to heap up knowledge which a tenacious memory never lost, losing no opportunity, ever ready to strike occasion in its flight, he suddenly emerged into public view, an expert literary workman, and with store of scientific information, the fruit of original discovery, sufficient to secure him a place among the first physical philosophers of his time. Too long a stonemason to be ever sleeked down into the smooth drawing-room gentleman, rugged, shaggy, burly, like a rough-hewn statue of old red sandstone, he was yet possessed of a very high intellectual culture, familiar with the discussions which have agitated philosophical schools, intimately acquainted with his country's poetry, and master of a style which reminded one of Addison.

His school education was meagre. Through life, he has learned more by the eye than by the ear, and he did not find much to interest him in the instructions of the village

pedagogue. He commenced Latin. But he found nothing to attract him in the rudiments of the language. They were exceedingly dry, and he saw no prospect of their becoming alive or useful. He felt his eyes bandaged, and he would not open his mouth to receive the necessary though unpalatable fare. He experienced precisely such a craving for the tangible and practical, as made Arnold, when a boy, refuse to master quantities and accents, and turn from "words" to "things." But Arnold regretted his early refusal, and Miller has still more reason to lament his boyish aversion to Latin. We may remark in passing, that though it ought to be the aim of every teacher to cast, by his skill, an interest over the barest matters, it is an indubitable principle in early education, that the pupil should receive much blindfold, without either liking or understanding it. Both for the culture of faculty, and in order to prepare a man for the many cases in life, in which he will have to proceed unfaltering, when, for a time, the interest flags, and the result is obscure or uncertain, this is a principle of capital importance.

The fact, however, was so, that Hugh Miller left school without gaining even an initial acquaintance with the ancient languages. It is in perfect consistence with all which can be urged in honor of the present and the practical, to avow a feeling of regret on account of this circumstance. True it is, that there exists a vast and noble modern literature, and that the man who knows modern history and a few modern languages, has undergone a very valuable intellectual training. Yet it is a fact, at no time to be forgotten, that every man is "heir of all the ages" behind him, that, in virtue of his intellect, imagination, and sympathy, he may connect himself with earliest times, that he may enrich and exercise his mind by a sympathizing acquaintance

with every form of national and individual life, and every masterpiece of mind, which the centuries behind him can show. The past may be compared to a great, ever-ascending pyramid, to which each generation has added a layer or stratum, and from the top of which each generation, as it emerges into the light of the present, may see further than its predecessor. Education is in every age more difficult than in the preceding. But the reward increases in exact proportion to the labor: the higher the pyramid to be ascended, the wider the prospect to be obtained. And it is precisely the strong man, the man endowed with great powers of intellectual vision, who will profit most largely by the extension of the horizon. Hugh Miller, with his fine, scholarly memory, and calm comprehensiveness of glance, is just the man we should like to have seen standing on the pyramid of the past.

It may seem strange, but we must confess that our regret that Hugh Miller did not at an early period acquaint himself with the languages of antiquity is confirmed rather than removed by a consideration of his style. That style we have already alluded to in terms of commendation; and it were not easy to confer on it too high praise. Dr. Buckland did not scruple to inform the world, that he "would give his left hand to possess such powers of description" as Hugh Miller. Recollecting the staid and prosaic habits of professors, we cannot but feel that Dr. Buckland must have been very much struck indeed. The style in question is one of very rare excellence. Easy, fluent, clear, and expressive, it adapts itself, like a silken shawl, to every swell, and motion, and curve of a subject. It is graphic yet not extravagant, strong without vociferation, measured without formality, classically chaste yet pleasingly adorned. It has the soft

flow and easy cadence which marked the best distinctive styles of the eighteenth century, stubborned with something of the sterner music of the nineteenth. Such a style belongs only to men of genius. Rich, lucid, pictorial, it casts fascination over the old armor of the *pterichthys*, or shows a whole geographical district at one view, the physiognomic features strongly brought out, and the whole robed in a beauty at once poetic and scientific.

Yet, we repeat, it seems to us matter for regret, in a linguistic point of view, that Hugh Miller turned away from the portals of antiquity. The almost universally received canon of English style, that it ought to be extremely Saxon, we venture to call in question. It appears rather to be the case that Saxon may be generally trusted to take care of itself, and that mass, majesty, power, and deep, rhythmic cadence, are best secured by an infusion of the Latin element. The grandest prose styles in the language are cased in the Roman armor. The "cathedral music" of Milton was toned by the classic tongues. Johnson went, no doubt, to an unnatural excess, yet the power exercised by his style when he used it must not be overlooked. Burke was a classical scholar. So, with emphasis, was Gibbon. De Quincey, Carlyle, Ruskin, and Macaulay, the most wonderful stylists of our day, are all familiar with the ancient languages. It were, perhaps, bold to assert that this element is absolutely necessary to an English style of the highest order. But the instances cited, together with the fact that very important component parts of our language—parts which embrace more than mere words, and must have influenced the very idiom of the tongue—are derived from antiquity, may sufficiently vindicate the declaration, that Hugh Miller's style would have gained in stateliness and range, had

he become, in his earlier days, a thorough classical scholar. In the treatment of a vast majority of subjects, a simple Saxon style, of the Bunyan or Goldsmith type, will suffice; a good Saxon style is as superior to a bad Latin style, as that of Goldsmith was to that of Johnson; but in the highest flights of an author—and Hugh Miller has thought to sustain him in the loftiest linguistic flights — one floats best on the broad pinions of Latin.

But if the classic tongues are an important accession to a literary education, there are other parts, still less easily dispensed with, and in regard to these Hugh Miller furnishes no subject for complaint. With quick faculty and open sympathy, he mastered all the English books that came in his way. He commenced to read at about six years of age, and set about forming a little library for himself. It began with our invaluable nursery literature, rich in adventure, abounding with heroes,—the epic Jack, the travelled Sinbad, the interesting, neat-footed Cinderella, the shifty and politic Puss, knowing how to turn boots to advantage; and the rest. Pope's heroes, in his metamorphosis of Homer's *Iliad*, came next. The author of *Eothen* testifies how the heart of every noble boy is stirred by the fierce and fine-spoken valor of the Popian warriors, set as it is in a melody, clear and ringing as the clang of arms. The *Pilgrim's Progress*, that book for the nursery, the home, the shop, the study, the deathbed, followed. At ten, he fell in with blind Harry's *Wallace*, and some time after, with Barbour's *Bruce*, and was forthwith a patriot and Scotchman to the finger-tips. During all this time, he was under the full influence of Presbyterian opinions and prepossessions. And thus his days passed, until he reached the threshold of manhood, and adopted a profession.

The life of Hugh Miller as an apprentice and journey-

man mason may be with sufficient accuracy imagined. It was one of continual toil, and, now and then, of severe hardship. He lived in various localities through the country, generally in bothies or barracks, where several workmen put up together. But for a habit of taciturnity, and a tendency to musing and poetry, there was no difference discernible between him and any other mason. Of subsequent elevation, he never dreamed. His accent was rude, and his appearance gave no hint of intellectual culture. With a leathern apron before him, foul with mud and dust, his hands, it might be, bleeding with his work among the wet stones, none would have recognized him for a man of peculiar and exquisite endowment, who had even then acquired that easy and graceful mastery over the English language, which was to charm a large audience of the most cultivated intellects of the age, and woke the admiring despair of men staggering under their load of erudition. We cannot refrain from taking one look at Hugh Miller during his life as a journeyman mason. The passage by means of which we do so, and which occurs in his autobiography, insists upon associating itself in our minds with that in which Milton so sublimely represents the student of his time as outwatching the bear in converse with the spirit of Plato:—

“ There was no one in the barrack with whom I cared much to converse, or who, in turn, cared much to converse with me; and so I learned, on the occasions when the company got dull and broke up into groups, to retire to the hay-loft where I slept, and pass there whole hours seated on my chest. The loft was a vast apartment, some fifty or sixty feet in length, with its naked rafters raised little more than a man’s height over the floor; but in the starlit nights, when the openings in the wall assumed the character of

square patches of darkness-visible stamped upon utter darkness, it looked quite as well as any other unlighted place that could not be seen, and in nights brightened by the moon, the pale beams, which found access at openings and crevices, rendered its wide area quite picturesque enough for ghosts to walk in. But I never saw any; and the only sounds I heard were those made by the horses in the stable below, champing and snorting over their food. They were, I doubt not, happy enough in their dark stalls, because they were horses, and had plenty to eat, and I was at times quite happy enough in the dark loft above, because I was a man, and could think and imagine. It is, I believe, Addison who remarks, that if all the thoughts which pass through men's minds were to be made public, the great difference which seems to exist between the thinking of the wise and of the unwise would be a good deal reduced; seeing that it is a difference which does not consist in their not having the same weak thoughts in common, but merely in the prudence through which the wise suppress their foolish ones. I still possess notes of the cogitations of these solitary evenings, ample enough to show that they were extraordinary combinations of the false and the true; but I at the same time hold them sufficiently in memory to remember, that I scarce, if at all, distinguished between what was false and true in them at the time. The literature of almost every people has a corresponding early stage, in which fresh thinking is mingled with little conceits, and in which the taste is usually false, but the feeling true."

For a protracted period, Hugh Miller worked for his daily bread, pick or trowel in hand. He, then, for a short time, acted as accountant in a bank in his native town of Cromarty. He had become slightly known in the literary world by the publication of a volume of poems, and contrib-

uted to certain periodical works. A volume of tales and legends, now very well known, brought him still further into notice. But the famous non-intrusion controversy was then agitating Scotland. Hugh Miller, strong in his Presbyterian leanings, and keenly alive to the evils of lay patronage, addressed a letter to Lord Brougham, publishing the piece in form of a pamphlet. It awakened a wide interest, and was complimented in no measured terms by O'Connell and Mr. Gladstone. Dr. Candlish, then busied, in co-operation with the other leaders of the evangelical party, about setting on foot a newspaper to advocate the views of the non-intrusionists, had perused the letter in manuscript, and at once pronounced its author the fitting man to conduct the paper. So, in 1840, Hugh Miller became editor of the *Witness* newspaper, and a very brief period elapsed ere he was one of the most influential men in his country.

The "able editor," if we may be permitted to interpose a semi-philosophical reflection, seems to us something of an interim phenomenon. He marks a state of transition from a state of information and intelligence gone past, to a state of general intellectual culture not yet arrived. It is not indeed necessary to suppose that he will himself pass away; such a supposition would, on the contrary, be highly absurd: but he may gradually undermine the ground he himself stands on, and there are not wanting indications in the present day, that he is being overtaken by the general intelligence. In the olden time, in the days, for instance, of our old friend Abbot Samson, of St. Edmundsbury monastery in the twelfth century, men were led blindfold by some one man who had his eyes open. The chief saw for the vassal, and led him along unknowing whither he went. The priest saw for the flock, told it what he chose, and was

implicitly believed. It was, in Fichte's phraseology, the period of unquestioning submission to authority. We are now in progress—we may at least hope or suppose—toward that intellectual state which Fichte defined as “ freedom in consistence with reason.” Meanwhile, the time is characterized by partial submission and partial freedom. The mass of men judge more, know more, are more free and self-established, than the retainer or monk of the middle ages. The newspaper editor still does much of the thinking for men in general, and people submit, so far, their thoughts to him. But, by the action of the press, you obtain, on the one hand, a greater amount of freedom than ever distinguished the mass before, and, on the other, a higher average of information, a more general exercise of thought, than, were men unassisted by newspapers, would subsist. Mr. Carlyle must not sneer too bitterly against the able editor. The matter perhaps most to be regretted in connection with the profession is, that men, often of great reach and sagacity, should spend their strength in the continual day drudgery of editorial toil. One can sympathize with Hugh Miller when he makes use of these words:—“ I remembered that I was a *writer*; that it was my *business* to write,—to cast, day after day, shavings from off my mind (the figure is Cowper's)—that went rolling away, crisp and dry, among the vast heap already on the floor, and were never more heard of,” &c. It must not, however, be forgotten, that it is every man's duty to lay so much of his heart's blood on the altar of his time, to speak to and guide his own generation, though other generations hear him not. Now, more than heretofore, we must be content to see a man spreading over twenty years, in weekly dispensings, that teaching which, if condensed into one work,—the result of twenty years' endeavor—might

live for twenty centuries. The harvests of the present are not lost, though they are swiftly gathered off the ground and make room for others. Hugh Miller has not been thrown away as a newspaper editor. His teachings have sunk deep into the heart of Scotland, and work at the roots of the national life. More than any layman he contributed to the founding of the Free Church.

But we must view Miller somewhat more particularly in his capacity of man of science. In the commencement of *The Old Red Sandstone*, there occurs the following passage. His life as a stone-mason had begun on the previous day:—

“All the workmen rested at midday, and I went to enjoy my half-hour alone on a mossy knoll in the neighboring wood, which commands through the trees a wide prospect of the bay and the opposite shore. There was not a wrinkle on the water, nor a cloud in the sky, and the branches were as moveless in the calm as if they had been traced on canvas. From a wooded promontory that stretched half-way across the Frith, there ascended a thin column of smoke. It rose straight as the line of a plummet for more than a thousand yards, and then, on reaching a thinner stratum of air, spread out equally on every side like the foliage of a stately tree. Ben Wyvis rose to the west, white with the yet unwasted snows of winter, and as sharply defined in the clear atmosphere, as if all its sunny slopes and blue retiring hollows had been chiselled in marble. A line of snow ran along the opposite hills; all above was white, and all below was purple. They reminded me of the pretty French story, in which an old artist is described as tasking the ingenuity of his future son-in-law, by giving him as a subject for his pencil a flower-piece composed of only white flowers, of which the one half were to

bear their proper color, the other half a deep purple hue, and yet all be perfectly natural; and how the young man resolved the riddle and gained his mistress, by introducing a transparent purple vase into the picture, and making the light pass through it on the flowers that were drooping over the edge. I returned to the quarry, convinced that a very exquisite pleasure may be a very cheap one, and that the busiest employments may afford leisure enough to enjoy it. The gunpowder had loosened a large mass in one of the inferior strata, and our first employment, on resuming our labors, was to raise it from its bed. I assisted the other workmen in placing it on edge, and was much struck by the appearance of the platform on which it had rested. The entire surface was ridged and furrowed like a bank of sand that had been left by the tide an hour before. I could trace every bend and curvature, every cross hollow and counter ridge of the corresponding phenomenon; for the resemblance was no half resemblance—it was the thing itself, and I had observed it a hundred and a hundred times when sailing my little schooner in the shallows left by the ebb. But what had become of the waves that had thus fretted the solid rock, or of what element had they been composed? I felt as completely at fault as Robinson Crusoe did on his discovering the print of a man's foot on the sand. The evening furnished me with still further cause of wonder. We raised another block in a different part of the quarry, and found that the area of a circular depression in the stratum below was broken and flawed in every direction, as if it had been the bottom of a pool recently dried up, which had shrunk and split in the hardening. Several large stones came rolling down from the diluvium in the course of the afternoon. They were of different qualities from the sandstone below,

and from one another, and, what was more wonderful still, they were all rounded and water-worn, as if they had been tossed about in the sea, or the bed of a river, for hundreds of years. There could not, surely, be a more conclusive proof that the bank which had enclosed them so long, could not have been created on the rock on which it rested. No workman ever manufactures a half-worn article, and the stones were all half-worn! And, if not the bank, why, then, the sandstone underneath? I was lost in conjecture, and found that I had food enough for thought that evening without once thinking of the unhappiness of a life of labor."

That company of quarrymen on the banks of the Cromarty Frith, on that fine spring morning, had been a sight worth seeing. Nothing, probably, would have struck us as we marked the group going out in the morning. Nothing would have arrested our attention in the somewhat lank, bushy-headed, quiet-looking lad, who worked hard, but seemed somewhat of a novice, as we watched them at their toil. But, when we observed, at the hour of noon, that while the others went to lounge, or smoke, or doze, this young man found his rest and pleasure in gazing upon that sublime panorama, where, in the west, Wyvis presides among the mountains, and the glassy Frith lies lake-like at his feet, reminding one of the fine lines in which an American poet describes a great mountain, looking down in the pride of a monarch,

“While far below the lake in bridal rest  
Sleeps with his glorious picture on her breast;”

when we observed that his eye brightened with the glow of pure delight, and continued to rest on the scene until every feature was pencilled out and hung in the hall of

memory; we might have begun to suspect that there was something unusual in this mason. We might have begun to surmise, that nature had twined around his heart some of those finer threads of sympathy which draw her favored child away from the crowd to her own breast. We might have ventured to predict, that the man before us would not die in his present capacity. And then, when we returned with him to the quarry, and noted that, while the others who toiled with him, as they turned up stone after stone, found no sermons therein for them, and felt no questionings arise in their minds, his eye kindled with the quick piercing gleam of curiosity, and he could not resist the impulse to question, and examine, and infer; we might again have ventured to affirm, that nature had here a son who would one day know her well, and perhaps reveal her to men.

We should not have erred in our surmisings. The inquisitive look and cautious glance of that quarryman were signs of the presence of one of the finest observational capacities of the age. The training of the faculty had begun in early youth; its exercise was the solace of years of toil, and the ultimate guide to a brilliant and world-wide reputation. By the shores of the Friths of Cromarty and Moray, under the direction of Uncle Sandy, young Hugh had learned to watch the habits of the crab and the lobster, to admire the tints of the sea-moss, to wonder at the organization of the sea-hare and cuttle-fish. His life as a mason furnished admirable opportunities for the gratification of his curiosity, and the exercise of his observational powers. He was, he tells us, "an explorer of caves and ravines—a loiterer along sea-shores—a climber among rocks." Surrounded by the deep silence of a workman's life, in the seclusion of tastes unshared, of powers unknown, of ambition unawakened, he pursued, calmly,

steadily, accurately, his course of observation. Living a life in reality apart, strengthening and expanding his general powers by the study of philosophy and poetry he did not permit his observation to degenerate into a childish storing up of isolated facts. He combined a generalizing power of a high order, with that of minute, unfailing observation. He learned to unite the broad glance of the geographer, with the microscopic inspection of the mineralogist. He could chronicle every tint of hue, every line of form, in the scale embedded in the rock; while by wide philosophic induction, he could ascertain precisely what contribution was made by that scale to the geological history of the planet.

Traversing Scotland from the German Ocean to the Atlantic, from Pentland Frith to the Cheviots, living now among the craggy valleys of Argyllshire, now upon the sandy flats of Moray, his eye became accustomed to every form of landscape. He came speedily to know his country with that profound knowledge, which recognizes the anatomy under the form, and which can predict the form from the anatomy. Possessing also that delicate sensibility to beauty, and that familiar acquaintance with the descriptive stores of English poetry, to which we have already alluded, he was able to cast exquisite lights of fancy over those landscapes which science first revealed to him in their rugged and literal truth. His descriptions of nature were of a kind not merely to instruct and delight the man of science, but to afford intense gratification to the artist, and whoever had a soul open to the enjoyment of nature's beauty. We refer at present to a quality of description deeper than mere style. It relates to the exhibition of nature's facts, which must first be known, and that in a peculiar manner, before the effect can be produced. Miller's descriptions of natural scenes may be compared with those of Ruskin.

He, as well as the great pictorial critic, produces pictures, clear, definite, visible, which one can hang up in the chambers of his mind, and gaze on with unsated pleasure. Hugh Miller and Ruskin started from different points. The latter set out from beauty. He looked over nature for the Beautiful. Had scientific accuracy proved inconsistent with beauty, he would have discarded scientific accuracy, and wrapped himself in a garb of fantasy. But as he looked over nature through the glass of beauty, he discerned, as he believed, that the loveliness of truth was greater than the loveliness of fantasy. So science became for him the handmaid of beauty; his imagination smiled most brightly beside the homely fires of fact. Hugh Miller started from the side of science. He sought for, he described, bare truth. He desired to know and show what the world was, making no postulate in favor of beauty. He opened his eyes and looked. He followed the lines, and imitated the colors, of reality. He held up the page, and lo! the result was beauty. Ruskin set out with poetry, and met science: Hugh Miller set out with science, and met poetry.

A parallel might be instituted, also, between Ruskin and Miller in this, That each attracted to his particular subject of study, a large audience of those previously repelled. Ruskin, by expounding Art on broader principles and in a more eloquent manner than had been formerly done, by freeing it of encumbering technicalities and allying it to general human sympathy, drew a vast miscellaneous audience to listen to essentially profound and accurate artistic teaching. Miller, by arraying science in that garb of beauty which belongs to all the visible forms of nature, allured a similar audience to receive scientific instruction of a kind correspondingly deep and exact.

As a geologist, Hugh Miller stands in the highest of all

orders, if in that order he does not occupy one of the first stations. He is in the order of original discoverers. His place is among the honored few, who have added to the domain of human knowledge. He accurately mapped out, as represented in his own country, one of the most interesting and least known of geographical formations, the Old Red Sandstone. He made express additions to the number of its classified organisms. His views of the science as a whole are comprehensive and philosophical, but it is on this distinctively that his fame as a geologist will repose.

In the cottage of Hugh Miller's boyhood, was that "one Book, wherein for several thousands of years the spirit of man has found light, and an interpreting response to whatever is deepest in him," and which is still the Word of God, whatever the author of these words may think. In Hugh Miller's education, the most important agent of all had been the Bible. For many years, the influence of early instruction had seemed to have passed away, but before the time at which he quitted manual labor, he had reflected deeply on religious subjects, had accepted Christianity as a living faith, and owned the gravitating power of that "Divine Man" whom he saw to be "the sole gravitating point of a system which owes to Him all its coherence, and which would be but a chaos were He away." This leads us to one of the most important aspects in which Hugh Miller can be viewed—that great practical aspect, namely, in which he unites the theologian and the man of science. We shall introduce our remarks upon him in this capacity by a quotation from the remarkable chapter which closes his "*Footprints of the Creator*:"—

"The first idea of every religion on earth which has arisen out of what may be termed the spiritual instinct of man's nature, is that of a future state; the second idea is, that in

this state men shall exist in two separate classes—the one in advance of their present condition, the other far in the rear of it. It is on these two great beliefs that conscience everywhere finds the fulcrum from which it acts upon the conduct; and it is wholly inoperative as a force without them. And in that one religion among men that, instead of retiring, like the pale ghosts of the others, before the light of civilization, brightens and expands in its beams, and in favor of whose claim as a revelation from God the highest philosophy has declared, we find these two master ideas occupying a still more prominent place than in any of those merely indigenous religions that spring up in the human mind of themselves. . . . . There is not in all revelation a single doctrine which we find oftener, or more clearly enforced, than that there shall continue to exist, through the endless cycles of the future, a race of degraded men and of degraded angels. Now it is truly wonderful how thoroughly, in its general scope, the revealed pieces on to the geologic record. We know, as geologists, that the dynasty of the fish was succeeded by that of the reptile—that the dynasty of the reptile was succeeded by that of the mammiferous quadruped—and that the dynasty of the mammiferous quadruped was succeeded by that of man, as man now exists—a creature of mixed character, and subject, in all conditions, to wide alternations of enjoyment and suffering. We know, further—so far, at least, as we have yet succeeded in deciphering the record—that the several dynasties were introduced, not in their lower, but in their higher forms; that, in short, in the imposing programme of creation it was arranged, as a general rule, that in each of the great divisions of the procession the magnates should walk first. We recognize yet further the fact of degradation specially exemplified in the fish and the

reptile. And then, passing on to the revealed record, we learn that the dynasty of man in the mixed state and character is not the final one, but that there is to be yet another creation, or, more properly, *re-creation*, known theologically as the Resurrection, which shall be connected in its physical components, by bonds of mysterious paternity, with the dynasty which now reigns, and be bound to it mentally by the chain of identity, conscious and actual; but which, in all that constitutes superiority, shall be as vastly its superior, as the dynasty of responsible man is superior to even the lowest of the preliminary dynasties. We are further taught, that at the commencement of this last of the dynasties there will be a re-creation of not only elevated, but also of degraded beings—a re-creation of the *lost*. We are taught yet further, that though the present dynasty be that of a lapsed race, which at their first introduction were placed on higher ground than that on which they now stand, and sank by their own act, it was yet part of the original design, from the beginning of all things, that they should occupy the existing platform; and that Redemption is thus no after-thought, rendered necessary by the Fall, but, on the contrary, part of a general scheme, for which provision had been made from the beginning; so that the Divine Man, through whom the work of restoration has been effected, was in reality, in reference to the purposes of the Eternal, what he is designated in the remarkable text, '*the Lamb slain from the foundations of the world!*' Slain from the foundations of the world! Could the assertors of the stony science ask for language more express? By piecing the two records together—that revealed in Scripture, and that revealed in the rocks—records which, however widely geologists may mistake the one, or commentators misunderstand the other, have

emanated from the same great Author—we learn that in slow and solemn majesty has period succeeded period, each in succession ushering in a higher and yet higher scene of existence; that fish, reptiles, mammiferous quadrupeds, have reigned in turn; that responsible man, ‘made in the image of God,’ and with dominion over all creatures, ultimately entered into a world ripened for his reception: but, further, that this passing scene, in which he forms the prominent figure, is not the final one in the long series, but merely the last of the *preliminary* scenes; and that that period to which the by-gone ages, incalculable in amount, with all their well proportioned gradations of being, form the imposing vestibule, shall have perfection for its occupant, and eternity for its duration. I know not how it may appear to others; but, for my own part, I cannot avoid thinking that there would be a lack of proportion in the series of being, were the period of perfect and glorified humanity abruptly connected, without the introduction of an intermediate creation of *responsible* imperfection, with that of the dying irresponsible brute. That scene of things in which God became Man, and suffered, *seems*, as it no doubt *is*, a necessary link in the chain.”

The theologian of the nineteenth century will have to know and ponder such passages as this, to scrutinize carefully the intimations they read him, to follow conscientiously the clue they put into his hand. The seventeenth century is known among the centuries as that in which the written Word of God was explored, so to speak, to its inmost recess. We say not the work was finished; but, of all ages, the most strictly biblical, that which seemed to live in and upon the simple and separate Bible, was the seventeenth. One great task of the nineteenth century seems to be, to search into and know the works of God. It stands distinguished

as the age of physical science. There was a certain danger that theologians should forget that God made the world, and that therefore it was holy. The gaze of hallowed ecstasy with which David had looked from the battlements of Zion, upon the palm-crowned mountains that stood around, as he seized his harp, and burst into a song of praise to God the Maker, seemed to have darkened and narrowed into a cold, critical, peering look, that searched for flaws in creeds, and glanced rather timorously towards the mountains, as if it might turn out that God had not made them after all. As must ever and universally be the case, partiality was error. A certain littleness was imparted to the views of the physical world, as a piece of God's workmanship; a certain glory was taken away from the Word of God, as the oracle of the moral world; by the absence of that light which they were fitted to cast on each other. Such men as Thomas Chalmers, Hugh Miller, John Pye Smith, and others, have essayed to show the inter-reflection of light and glory between the two, and the day will come when the work they have commenced will be fully accomplished. Its even partial accomplishment will mark our century. As it is, the theologian who accepts the facts of God's workmanship as not to be disputed, as facts which, if once well proved, it were irreverent, nay blasphemous, to deny, may already, we think, obtain dim but glorious glimpses into far regions of spiritual truth — into the destinies of man, into the essentials of judgment, into the meaning of death — which the lamp of science faintly indicates when hung over the Word of God. But much has yet to be done, and much must be acknowledged to lie yet unrevealed. Meanwhile the two grand perils are, on the one hand, ignoble fear, and, on the other, presumption. The man who looks over the moral world, and discerns that it is an inexplicable chaos, a stan-

dardless battle, a sick and fevered dream, unless God has spoken in the Bible, may surely have such manlike trust in God that he can fearlessly examine every story of the physical dwelling He has made for him, although, for the present, God does not reveal to him how its apparent discrepancies with the moral fabric He has let down from heaven are to be harmonized. Surely, on the other hand, the man, who talks in the fashionable pagan language of the day of "the gods," and who yet must see these gods preparing this earth for man, with much fuss and commotion, and then sitting, like a set of fools, to see the great game of blind-man's-buff which their children play, and laugh at the gropings and mistakes,—the man, who, if he is honest, and bold, and unhesitating in discrowning God and his religion, must accept as the correct and unexaggerated scheme of world-history, that ghastly poem of Poe's, in which, with perfect honesty from his point of view, he portrays man, since his arrival here, as running after phantoms, of which the central phantom is merely the most phantasmal of all, and which very appropriately concludes in these words,

"The play is the tragedy Man,  
And the hero the conqueror Worm:"

this man, we say, might surely pause ere he declares that the scientific information of yesterday contradicts the alone explaining theory of man's existence. Let the Christian have faith in God's word: let the infidel tumble his moral world in ruins; there is not the slightest fear of his tumbling *the* moral world into ruins. Both infidels and Christians are always thinking God is such an one as themselves. The one party thinks it has got the Sun of the moral universe fairly out. The other takes to trembling and

vociferating, and holding up supplementary rush-lights, as if it feared the Sun was going out. Meanwhile the ages roll on, and the mist rolls off, and the Sun is there still. From every new elevation of science, fear it not, there will be a wider prospect of truth. Just now we may be in the valley, and the ocean may be shut out which we saw clearly from the lower hill behind. But onwards! When we reach the top of this other hill before us, the ocean of truth, and the Sun that clothes it all in gold, will be seen spreading further than ever before. Hugh Miller's clear, strong intellect, fine poetic discernment of nature's all-pervading analogies, and manly piety, fit him well to pioneer the scientific, cosmical theology of the latter time.

We have not spoken expressly of Hugh Miller's poetry, and it is unnecessary to do so. His finest poetry is, we presume, his prose. He would, we feel assured, agree in this himself. We go on to mention a characteristic which harmonizes finely with the general strength of his nature, and which seems the result of this in combination with the kindness of his heart: we mean his humor. This is not one of the most important or engrossing of his qualities, but, as far as it goes, it is genuine, and remarkably pleasing. It is a perception of the laughable in nature; of those weaknesses which are not sins, those incongruities which do not hurt, those self-revelations which oscillate amusingly between the egotism that is offensive and the vanity that is despicable; of all those things which were manifestly intended to be kept in check by no ruder weapon than laughter, and which are not checked absolutely, because laughter is good for men in its time. Hugh Miller's laugh is always quiet and kindly; never, to our knowledge, cynical and contemptuous, save when some real iniquity is to be mocked into air. He has no feeling of contempt for the "young lady

passenger of forty or thereabouts," who took her seat in the same railway carriage with him, and who "had a bloom of red in her cheeks that seemed to have been just a little assisted by art, and a bloom of red in her nose that seemed not to have been assisted by art at all." It is merely a smile of hearty geniality which lights his features as he encounters two of Shenstone's nymphs on his visit to the Leasowes:—

"I had read Shenstone early enough to wonder what sort of looking people his Delias and Cecilias were; and now, ere plunging into the richly wooded Leasowes, I had got hold of the right idea. The two naileresses were really very pretty. Cecilia, a ruddy blonde, was fabricating tackets; Delia, a bright-eyed brunette, engaged in heading a double-double."

Even when he visits St. Paul's, and speaks thus, he is in the best humor, for all the slyness of his laugh:—

"It is comfortable to have only twopence to pay for leave to walk over the area of so noble a pile, and to have to pay the twopence, too, to such grave, clerical looking men as the officials at the receipt of custom. It reminds one of the blessings of a religious establishment in a place where otherwise they might possibly be overlooked; no private company could afford to build such a pile as St. Paul's, and then show it for twopences."

But perhaps, of all we can say in praise of Hugh Miller, the highest compliment, all things considered, is the last we are to pay him. It is, that he is, in the best sense, a gentleman; that he is truly and strictly polite. We intend, by this, very high praise indeed; true politeness is one of the rarest things. The word has been variously defined. We have heard it indicated as being a knowledge of the little usages of society, such as not pouring tea into a

saucer, not speaking in company without an introduction, and such like, and the habit of strictly and naturally conforming to such. This requires no refutation: its very utterance, on the principle that in speaking of a thing you set in the foreground your main idea regarding it, implies hopeless ignorance of the nature of politeness:—

“The churl in spirit, howe'er he vail  
His want in forms for fashion's sake,  
Will let his coltish nature break  
At seasons through the gilded pale.”

True politeness may be met in the hut of the Arab, in the courtyard of the Turk, in the cottage of the Irishman, and is excessively rare in ball-rooms. It is independent of accent and of form, it is one of the constant and universal noble attributes of man, wherever and howsoever developed. It has been defined again, “perfect ease, without vulgarity or affectation.” Here manifestly a great advance is made; one half of politeness is correctly defined. Yet we think there is overlooked that part of politeness which refers to others besides one's self; and politeness, as it consists wholly in a certain dealing of man with man, must include both parties in its reference. The truly polite man is not merely at ease, but always sets you at ease. We venture to define it thus: Politeness is natural, genial, manly *deference*, with a natural delicacy in dealing with the feelings of others, and without hypocrisy, sycophancy, or obtrusion. This, we think, is at once sufficiently inclusive and exclusive. It excludes a great many. We cannot agree that Johnson was polite; that is, if politeness is to be distinguished from nobleness, courage, and even kindness of heart; in a word, from everything but itself. Burns was polite, when jewelled duchesses were charmed with his

ways; Arnold was polite, when the poor woman felt that he treated her as if she were a lady; Chalmers was polite, when every old woman in Morningside was elated and delighted with his courteous salute. But Johnson, who shut a civil man's mouth with, "Sir, I perceive you are a vile Whig," who ate like an Esquimaux, who deferred so far to his friends, that they could differ with him only in a round-robin, was not polite. Politeness is the last touch, the finishing perfection, of a noble character. It is the gold on the spire, the sunlight on the corn field, the smile on the lip of the noble knight lowering his sword point to his ladye-love. It results only from the truest balance and harmony of soul. We assert Hugh Miller to possess it. A duke in speaking to him would know he was speaking to a man as independent as himself; a boy, in expressing to him an opinion, would feel unabashed and easy, from his genial and unostentatious deference. He has been accused of egotism. The charge is a serious one; fatal, if it can be substantiated in any offensive degree, to politeness. And let it be fairly admitted that he knows his name is Hugh Miller, and that he has a colossal head, and that he once was a mason; his foible is probably that which caused Napoleon, in a company of kings, to commence an anecdote with "When I was a lieutenant in the regiment of La Fere." But we cannot think it more than a very slight foible; a manly self-consciousness somewhat in excess. His autobiography has been blamed as egotistic; we think without cause. The sketches appear to us much the reverse. They are almost entirely what he has seen; what he has done or been is nowise protruded. And shall we blame a man with the eye and the memory of Hugh Miller, for leading us through the many scenes of Scottish life, which he knows better than any man, because he does so in

a very natural and orderly way? Wherever he is egotistic, he is not so in conversation—the great test of the polite man. Years in the quarry have not dimmed in Hugh Miller that finishing gleam of genial light which plays over the framework of character, and is politeness. Not only did he require honest manliness for this; gentleness was also necessary. He had both, and has retained them; and so merits fairly

“The grand old name of gentleman.”

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It is now 1857; and with all the hopes and forebodings of a new year, there mingle, in my breast, the recollection of a kindness no more to be experienced, of a condescending genial helpfulness no longer to instruct, of a steadfast nobleness whose living presence will no longer animate and cheer, of a great and godly man who has passed away. In the last days of 1856, Hugh Miller died: a self-sacrificed martyr to science. At the great work which was to complete his service to his country and mankind, he toiled on with indomitable resolution, amid the paroxysms of fearful disease. His powerful brain, wearied with the sustained tension of twenty years, recoiled from its work, and, as it were, groaned and struggled for rest. But that adamantine will knew no flinching. Ever, as the paroxysm passed by, and the soft glow of the old genius spread itself again along the mind, the most intense and unremitting exertion was compelled. The light burnt nightly in his chamber,

long after the midnight hour, as Hugh Miller continued to write, the body failing, the nerves fluttering, the brain held to its work only by that indomitable will. He feared madness might dash the pen from his hand, before the last line was traced. But the work was finished. On the last day of his life, Hugh Miller said it was done. Madness and the grave could not at least deprive him of that. Then, as might have been expected, despite consultation with a physician, the paroxysm returned with redoubled fury: ere it again subsided, Hugh Miller was no more. Let science honor her too devoted son! For her he worked on undaunted under the thunder-cloud; the lightnings of madness flashing ever and anon around him. He finished his work; closed the book; and looked up as if defiant of the lightning. But it came down and smote him; and he died, may we not say, the greatest of the martyrs of science.

## VII

### THE MODERN NOVEL.

DICKENS—BULWER—THACKERAY.

“LITERATURE,” says so distinguished a novelist as Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, “commences with poetical fiction, and usually terminates with prose fiction. It was so in the ancient world—it will be so with England and France. The harvest of novels is, I fear, a sign of the approaching exhaustion of the soil.” Of whatever the harvest spoken of is a sign, there can be no doubt of its own exuberance. The novel has gone far to supersede all other forms of literature; and where it does not supersede, it has an influence. Philosophy has receded into the background. Poetry, if in itself of rare perfection, occupies no such place in public estimation as it did in the days of Byron. History is specially commended as being equally pleasant reading with fiction. We have dukes and earls patronizing mechanics’ institutes and public libraries; we have platform speeches of the sweetest eloquence, setting forth the way in which science and philosophy are to be used in the self-culture of readers; we have the shelves well filled with metaphysical, historical, and scientific treatises. In eighteen months we revisit the institution, and inspect the books. The philosophers, the men of science, the historians, have enjoyed, like kings and queens at their country-seats, an honorable

seclusion : the novels are dog's-eared, crumpled, soiled, from the effects of affectionate familiarity. The attraction by which the young aspirant to literary distinction is at present drawn towards fictitious composition seems, at first sight, overpowering. Who would not enlist in an army in which the discipline is lax, the fighting not severe, and the prizes dazzling, rather than in one in which the discipline is the rigid restraint of truth, the fighting a stern struggle up the rugged crags of fact, and the prizes comparatively poor ? With all our enlightened support of literature, a young man who would at present determine to devote himself, with energies untrammelled by any other profession, with zeal undivided with any other pursuit, to philosophy, theology, social science, or history, trusting thereto for his daily bread, would do so at the risk of his life. We know an instance of a young literary man in London, of distinguished ability and high aims, who pursued studies of an important nature, but was compelled, at intervals, in order to secure subsistence, to write novels. There is a gentleman, now in Edinburgh, whose name is known in every part of the island, and whose works, in philosophy, political economy, and apologetics, are of high standing, who yet, we are confident, has derived no pecuniary profit whatever from the main labor of his life, and finds his talents of pecuniary avail, only in such off-hand work as occasional lecturing and contributions to the journals. Is not the temptation strong for such a man, to ungird the armor of the legionary, and bind on the light arms which are so effective ? Why should the youthful poet keep gazing into the face of the Beautiful, why should the young philosopher dig sedulously in the mines of thought for the True, if literary tinsel will best exchange for current coin, and men prefer the flowers that grow on the surface to the metal that is hidden below ?

These remarks may seem logically to require an unqualified denunciation of novels. But, for many reasons, we should deem this an unwise proceeding.

In the first place, he who would engage in the highest literature must always so do with somewhat of the spirit of a martyr. It has ever been the way to reward the most severe and noble efforts of mind in a manner which in itself seems paltry. Milton got five pounds for *Paradise Lost*. We cannot too often recall the remarkable fact. If every generation of mankind, succeeding the appearance of that poem, had raised to its author a new statue of solid gold, they would have made no approach to paying him. The Dantes, the Keplers, the Pascals, and such as they, are not so paid for their mental labors. It is a manifest appointment of nature that they should not be: and, let us say, it is a right appointment, benign, beautiful, and, for the men who seem passed over, an appropriate and sublime honor. By their capacity for such work, they afford a reasonable presumption that they can rightly estimate and duly contemn material payment. It is in celestial coin that they receive their wages. If they know not what this is, if they scorn it, let them descend to lower grades of intellectual labor; let them deal in goods known and wanted in the market, and they will have the success of ordinary traders. But the general law is open to no doubt: the highest spiritual employments are not distinguished by yielding large material rewards. The fact is exemplified in the case of whole professions. Ministers of the gospel will always be paid, on an average, at a rate in no degree correspondent to the abilities they possess or the functions they perform. To men of learning, to professors of erudition and philosophy, the same rule applies. No spectacle appears to us more truly despicable than that of any one who pretends to com-

municate to men the higher kinds of knowledge, complaining that he is not paid like successful confectioners or ballet dancers, and sending round his hat for coppers. The man who makes it his sole object to amuse, and has talents of extraordinary power, be he novelist or play actor, will be more handsomely remunerated, in the way he can value, than the man whose ambition it is to elevate and improve his fellows. The novelist himself who aims high, both in means and end, must submit to see his gains small in proportion. The public, however, let us add in a corner, has the option of doing that for men of lofty aspirations, which it is not becoming, which in some sense it is not possible, for them to do for themselves !

But it may be questioned, in the next place, whether the facts with which we set out,—facts of which, in themselves, there cannot be any doubt,—do not indicate chiefly a change in the proportion borne by one set of literary works to another, and not solely, if at all, a diminution either in the production or the perusal of those of the higher orders. It may be that though more novels are produced than treatises in history or science, though more fiction is read than philosophy or poetry, the reading public has been so much increased by the influence of novels, that the condition of higher literature is really improved. And to this consideration we may add the hope, that novels may in future do still more to promote this end, awakening the frivolous and indifferent to some sort of mental exertion, and handing them on to nobler studies. Still further it may be here urged, that there are not wanting, at present, novels, which themselves convey wholesome instruction, and which can hardly exercise an enervating influence. Such novels as those of Currer Bell, Kingsley, and Thackeray, are not to be confounded with the productions of the Minerva Press.

After all, the most pertinent remark which can be made as to this unexampled efflorescence of fictitious literature seems to be that it is a fact, and that it may be pronounced unalterable. This alone makes it worthy of consideration. It were very strange, too, if a phenomenon so vast in extent and so powerful in influence, had no real meaning and could be turned to no account. It may be that, by looking into the matter somewhat closely, we may discover some principle by which the man, who is conscientiously and resolutely bent upon a self-culture as complete as his faculties admit and his time affords, may safely and profitably undertake an incursion into fictitious literature.

What is a novel? The question seems exceedingly easy, and may be so. But it is well to have precise ideas as to its answer, for when you know accurately what a thing is, you have got, in germ, all that it is most important to know concerning it. What, then, we repeat, is a novel?

In every production of Art there are two principal elements, whose unity gives the result. The one is the original type presented in nature, the other the modification — the curtailment, addition, or transformation — effected by the free will and imaginative energy of the artist. Thus, in the art of painting, the type from which the artist sets out is some natural appearance, a landscape, a building, a face. If he is only a daguerreotypist, he records merely the literal facts of nature in their real localities. If he is a true artist, the daguerreotype can do no more than furnish him with studies, and only when he has combined these as he chooses and breathed into them the spirit of his own genius, has he produced a picture. In all Art this distinction holds good.

It is not difficult to discover the original type on which the novel is founded. If we consider, we shall find some-

thing not unlike it in life, though by no means the same. The direction in which to turn is manifestly that of history; the first thing that strikes us in a novel is its narrative. It may be profitable to look for a moment at history. If he has a true sense of his Art, the historian will find himself, in certain important respects, resembling the novelist. We do not allude to his depicting manners, or adopting a picturesque style. The similarity lies deeper; in the very materials with which he works. In the life of nations, as well as in that of individuals, are found circumstances corresponding to those which afford the novelist his coloring, and suggest to him his plot. These may serve the historical artist none the worse that the laws by which he works are those of stern realism. Incidents more stirring than imagination ever dreamed, characters more strange and puzzling than novelist ever portrayed, plot more dark and mysterious than ever artist devised, may be already provided him. He may lead us, in earnest curiosity, along the path of Providence, not blunting, by any anachronism of anticipation or disclosure, the feelings of wonder and admiration, with which, at the right moment, we behold the curtain rise. And, be it remarked, the more completely he thus imitates the recognized method of the novelist, the more emphatically does he bring before us the great lessons which it is his duty to teach. In the warlike contendings or peaceful labors of nations, in their growth and decline, in their birth, glory, and destruction, certain grand monitions are providentially addressed to us, constituting one principal portion of that system of education, practical or theoretic, by which nature is pervaded. We all acknowledge that the office of the historian is august and important. But the slightest reflection will make it plain, both that the sphere of the historian is not precisely that of the novelist,

and that there is a sphere in which the latter may convey instruction of a value equal to that conveyed by the former. The historian does not and cannot descend into domestic life. Nations in their national capacity and in their national doings are his theme; with battles, sieges, treaties, senates, cities, he deals. He may paint manners; but only in the mass. He may give details of private life; but only to exhibit the hidden strings which guide the men who guide nations. But domestic life has also its instructive lessons. Here, too, Providence teaches. In the festal assemblage and by the household hearth, beside her who is wreathed with orange flower and by the deathbed, the footsteps of Providence may be traced, the voice of Providence may be heard. Warnings, examples, encouragements; intimations, which, if known, prized, and used, would be more precious than rubies, are being ever presented in the common course of life. If it is right to strengthen and widen our powers of intellectual vision, by watching the dealings of God with nations, it is assuredly right, also, to have an accurate and extensive knowledge of domestic life, to gain a wider acquaintance, than our own circle affords, with the perils which beset our private walk, with the modes in which the problems of individual and family life have already been solved. To occupy a field thus rich and thus distinctly marked off, the biographer steps forward. And it will not be called in question that, in the biography, the original type of the novel is found. There is, however, in the circumstances of the case, a reason for fictitious biography, which does not exist for fictitious history. The most interesting and instructive series of incidents may occur in private life, yet cause appear why the actors should be veiled in secrecy. The fictitious form provides the veil. In some such series of incidents as we have supposed, lies the realistic ground-

work on which the novel should be constructed. By this it is connected with the world of fact. This is to it as the knowledge of the features of a locality, its leading geological lines, its distinctive botanical products, is to the artist who paints a landscape. If the novelist proceeds without such realistic basis, his work is sure to be worthless. The wing of imagination flaps at once in a vacuum. Weak sentimentality takes the place of manly feeling, faded commonplace is offered instead of fresh truth, the whole wears a flabby, sickly aspect, if only the novelist ignores fact and trusts solely to fancy. We do not know any instance of imaginative power on which we would more willingly rely, which we could more absolutely trust, than that of Dickens. Yet when he leaves the alleys of St. Giles and the office in Bow Street, which he has seen, and sets himself to depict what he merely imagines to exist, how strange is the work he produces! Literature does not contain a more false, foolish, preposterous character than Mrs. Clennam. Mr. Dickens fancied this must be what evangelical religion was; and if he had informed us that a Fakir or other Indian devotee swung himself daily in the air, by a hook attached to the top of Nelson's monument, he would not have committed a greater absurdity. We are quite sure there are as many persons in England who believe they will go to heaven by swinging by the foot, as there are who propose to compass that end by abstaining from their usual allowance of oysters. But if the necessity of a realistic basis is distinctly recognized, the function of the novelist is vindicated from all assault, the novel is worthy of respect and attention. The nominally fictitious author becomes the recorder of Providence in domestic life, the historian of the fireside, the philosopher of the family circle. The recognition of this necessity has of late

been more express than formerly. The temper of the time sets strongly towards rugged truth and away from smooth, painted falsehood. But no recognition of it could be too emphatic. On its practical acknowledgment we must hang our hope for the production of a literature, in name and form, for obvious and weighty reasons, fictitious, but in reality true, and an honor and blessing to the nation.

But the novel is a work of Art. There is more in it than bare reality. Of this fact the whole history of fictitious composition is a proof, and if the fact has been so, its theoretic vindication or the reverse is of comparatively slight importance. Fact, however, and theory agree. The novel is unquestionably a work of Art, and, being so, it must exhibit some element, for which we can find no precise equivalent, though there may be suggestion or analogue, in nature.

The novel, as we saw, differs broadly from the history. Its theme is always domestic life, however the domestic incidents with which it deals may be affected by public events; just as history is always national, though the destinies of nations may be influenced by domestic circumstances. But not even in the biography is there the precise counterpart of the novel. The biography is spread over the whole period of life. Its incidents derive their relative importance from the illustration they afford of character.

But in the novel a particular period of life is selected, the incidents are grouped round one centralizing interest, and the narrative stops short at life's grand climacteric. What is this interest? What this climacteric? It is love. We must consider it a little.

“ ‘Love, the soul of soul, within the soul,  
Evolving it sublimely. First, God’s love.’

‘And next,’ he smiled, ‘the love of wedded souls,  
Which still presents that mystery’s counterpart.  
Sweet shadow-rose, upon the water of life,  
Of such a mystic substance, Sharon gave  
A name to! human, vital, fructuous rose,  
Whose calyx holds the multitude of leaves,—  
Loves filial, loves fraternal, neighbor-loves,  
And civic, \* \* \* all fair petals, all good scents,  
All reddened, sweetened, from one central Heart!’”

Thus writes Mrs. Barrett Browning in her latest poem. If the first poem ever composed were still before us, should we not find it some lilt, of joyfulness and tears, sung by primeval lover beside the trysting tree? There are feelings of a purely spiritual nature, connecting themselves with man’s celestial relations and eternal destiny, which transcend all that pertain to earth. But of those which belong distinctively to the world of living men, whose dwelling is the heart that beats for threescore years and ten, whose sphere of operation is between the silent graves and the silent stars, the greatest, the mightiest, is love. The scale of human emotion, through all its changes of gladness and sorrow, lies between the silver treble of love and the deep bass of death. The fountain of life rises sunward, and the light that falls on its white foam at the highest point is love. The hill of life is climbed in the dewy morning: in the light of noon, on the green, unclouded summit, the loved one is met; as evening steals on, and the dew begins again to fall, the descent is slowly made towards the grave at the foot. Sometimes death starts up on the top, and chills the heart of love at its fullest throbbing: the might of the anguish is then measured by the intensity of the joy.

However we may represent this fact, even though we may be moved to a smile, a fact it is, and one of chief im-

portance. In the Scriptural view of man, it is explicitly attested. The emotion, of which, if we may so speak, the final end is marriage, is expressly appointed to the supremacy among the feelings by which one human being can be attracted towards or linked to another; and the arrangement of the social system, as exhibited in history, corresponds with the original appointment. Innumerable as are the interests which there circle, various as are the orbits there occupied, they all, directly or indirectly, own the regulating power of love.

Turning from life to literature, using the word in its most comprehensive sense, the same fact meets us in broad and clear reflexion. Love was the main theme of epic poetry, and may be called the sole theme of the lyre. Around love Tragedy and Comedy alike arranged their parts. Here, the lovers sat upon the dais, crimson broidered with gold, and from their happy faces gleamed out a light on all around. Comedy arranged the lights, placed the surrounding groups in the most effective positions, appointed the music and the dancing, and showered her smiles upon the happy pair. There, the blue of love's heaven shone pure and serene, above the summer ocean and the balmy isle: but suddenly the blissful calm was swallowed in black, firelit tornado, and, arrayed in the trailing draperies of storm, Tragedy swept by. Take love out of literature, and all of it which is not strictly scientific,—the simple statement of fact and law,—all of it that lies within the province of the imagination, falls into incoherence and disruption. It becomes a system of which the gravitating centre has been unfixed. But while love remains, however the form may change, the radical characteristics of the old imaginative literature will survive. Amid the multitudinous activity, and wild, free life of modern times, the drama and the epic of antiquity

may be said to have been shaken from their unities and proprieties, and finally dashed into fragments. But the joys and sorrows of love with which they were concerned emerged from the ruin, and commenced, in fresh and buoyant youth, a new epoch of literary representation in "*the modern novel.*"

The novel, therefore, is scientifically definable as a domestic history, in which the whole interest and all the facts are made to combine in the evolution of a tale of love. A biographic strain of which the key note is love. The application of terms may vary to any extent, but we are convinced that any inquiry into the nature of the novel, bearing reference at once to the laws of Art and to the facts of history, will conduct to a conclusion essentially the one with this.

It would appear to be irrefragably established that the love story is no mere conventional appendage of the modern novel, but bound up in its essence. The passion of love has been indissolubly connected with all imaginative literature. It will not, on a deliberate survey, be questioned by any, that the fictitious literature of modern times is, to at least a large extent, the more formal imaginative literature of antiquity, accommodated to a wider audience and engaged in by a larger class of authors. It were surely too bold to affix the name of conventionalism to what has been an unfailing characteristic of the most popular class of literary works, and which we found correspondent to an important fact in life.

Have we not found a clue at once to the cause of the supreme popularity of the novel with readers, and to the means by which the novelist secures this popularity? That ancient theme, to which the hearts of the old Greeks thrilled at the Olympic Games, and which fired the Arab eye at the

poetical contest in the desert, before the days of Mahomet, has been scrambled for in modern times, by romance poets and novelists, and the novelists have been very successful in the appropriation. They have possessed themselves of the irresistible fascination: they wield the spell which was never yet broken. The sympathetic imagination, evoked by the novelist, enables his reader to enjoy the happiness of the hero and heroine. No one is so stupid as to be unable to live in a land of reverie; the difficult thing is, amid the buffeting of the waves, to keep the foot firm, as on a rock, on the present; therefore the novelist dispenses joy to the widest class. But no one is so wise as to resist the charm. The philosopher succumbs to it as fast as to the toothache, time out of mind the sage's vanquisher. He laughs and weeps with the lover just as other men.

He weeps.—Yes; but may not this give us pause? The luxury of sorrow, about the existence of which there is not a whit more doubt than about that of the luxury of joy, has a puzzling look, which may justify us in turning aside for a moment to consider it. The pathos which wrings your heart, and bathes your cheek in tears, holds you enchain'd as powerfully as the gladness which makes you laugh for joy. Sympathetic participation is here out of the question. You rejoice *with* Shirley and Moore, when they at last beat out the music of their lives; but you cannot rejoice *with* Nancy when Sykes murders her. Yet the pleasure of tragedy, while of a more august and solemn, seems to be also of a more profound character than that of comedy. We venture upon an explanation of the fact. *All* mighty emotion is in itself pleasurable. This looks like, but is not, a contradiction in terms. Distress, it is true, cannot be delightful; but the weeping by which it is relieved, the overflow of the emotion, is pleasurable. The

fire itself burns and scathes the heart: but the streaming of the lava through its tear-channels bears away the woe, and produces, in so doing, a sensation of delight. So far there can be no dispute; the psychological fact is perfectly well known. But may it not be applied to the explanation of that singular pleasure with which we are concerned? Does not the secret of all the joy of tragedy and pathos lie in the skillful opening of the sluices, by which the surcharged fountains of the heart empty themselves in tears? Is not the flow of the emotion secured, without the suffering of the pain? The cause is brought into operation by imagination; the emotion naturally follows: but the surge of emotion and its cause are precisely proportioned to each other, and the former bears the latter fairly out of the heart. The difference between the distress occasioned by literal fact, and that evoked by the tragic artist, may be clearly perceived, by a glance at the scene to which reference has been already made, the murder of Nancy in *Oliver Twist*. Let one, after perusing the description given by Dickens, reflect for a moment on the possibility that such an incident may have occurred in actual life. He instantly experiences a thrill of regret and dismay. But it is very different from that felt while he listened to Mr. Dickens. A new condition affects the case. The sorrow is anchored in the heart by fact. To weep, it is true, gives relief: weeping, as distinguished from not weeping, sorrow relieved as distinguished from sorrow unrelieved, is pleasurable: but the knowledge that such girls have actually been killed can be washed out by no tears; it remains there, demanding a fresh flow, nay, demanding, to relieve the grating pain, that active effort be engaged in, to put such catastrophes beyond the limits of possibility. Imagination in the one case, lulls reason asleep,

and produces an emotion powerful while it lasts; when reason awakens, the man declares he has forgotten himself, and the cause and the emotion pass from the mind together. In all cases, whether of real belief or factitious, the emotion in itself is pleasurable: in each case, whether it overflows in weeping or no, it relieves the heart: but in the one case, the pain it assuages is deeply fixed in the heart, and the distress remains long, notwithstanding the alleviation: in the other, the emotion bears away all the pain, and reason closes behind sorrow the gates of the heart.

But besides this joy of sympathetic participation in happiness, and the other joy of deep and active emotion, though of the kind occasioned by distress, there is another which it is in the power of the novelist to confer upon his readers, and which, as representing one of those large classes not to be omitted in even a partial view of the subject, it will be well to notice. Like his ancient brethren, the epic and dramatic poets, the novelist calls into active operation the sympathies of approbation and disapprobation. He has at his disposal the princeliest rewards and the most severe punishments; love and death are in his hands. These he dispenses with what is not inappropriately styled poetic justice. It is customary to rail considerably at this idea of poetic justice, and to remark that life is sometimes not quite so just as poetry. Yet it lies deep in the nature of man, modified as it is by the circumstances of his present existence, to find in poetic justice an intense pleasure. Virtue consists in holding to the Good and the True in the face of opposition; in defying temptation; in buffeting circumstance; in smiling up, patient, courageous, thankful, through the drizzle of every day existence. There is a notion deep in the hearts of all of us, that we should be what we ought, were circumstances modified to suit us,

were we not the victims of a luckless destiny. With Becky Sharp, we think we could be good, if we had five thousand a year. If we have the five thousand, we would be virtuous upon five-and-twenty thousand. We should cultivate all sweet and generous emotions on a sunny bank in Eden. We might take a place in the church triumphant, but the church militant is left to its own battle. In one word, there is beside every man in life, a spectre, more dire than that old black spectre, Care, which restrains his generous impulses; the spectre Selfishness. Remove this phantom, and we would, as a rule, obey the nobler instinct. In literary representation, it is removed. We do not recognize ourselves in nature's mirror. Our instincts, unleashed by selfishness, fly fiercely at us, as dogs may fly at their master when bathing, and when, from his being undressed, they do not know him. Approbation, therefore, is readily accorded to such persons, in a drama or novel, as deserve it. And approbation is always pleasurable. The indignation accompanying disapprobation is to some extent the same; and partly it acts in the manner which we endeavored to define, in considering the luxury of distress. Along both with the approbation and the disapprobation comes an insinuating side wind of self-applause, conveying a portion of all the approbation felt on him that feels it, and casting conscience into pleasant slumber.

The modes of pleasing his readers which we have hitherto discovered to belong to the novelist, pertain primarily to that element in the novel, which is contributed by Art, in the exercise of her inalienable right to mould nature to suit her purposes, to deck her out in what new fascinations, to inspire her with what new thought, the artist chooses. But the delineation of reality itself is a source of real and potent pleasure. Of the enjoyment derived from what is strictly

called imitation in pictorial Art—from momentarily mistaking one thing for another—we do not now speak. We allude to the satisfaction experienced when literary description sets vividly before us any scene, face, or incident, which, in actual existence, would not in any measure arrest us. Mr. Dickens interests us in the description of a threadbare coat, on which our glance would not have lingered for a moment. Mr. Thackeray keeps us pleasantly entertained, in the presence of persons, whom, in actual life, we should find insufferably tedious. “A touch of nature makes the whole world kin.” When we recognize accurate description of fact in any literary work, we are apt to forget all other qualities in our abounding delight. No doubt this pleasure depends partly, if not entirely, on sympathy with the exertion of human power; but the fact is sufficient for us, and we shall not tarry to discuss its theory.

We have already ventured to hint a rule, to enunciate a principle, by which the novel may be tested, its dross discovered and rejected, its sterling metal discerned and appropriated. We have found it made up of a real and an ideal element. To investigate the connection between the two would lead us into deep and protracted discussion. But so much is known of the relation borne by the one to the other, that strength of realism is the surest pledge of strength in the exercise of the pure imagination. Let the demand made of novels therefore be, life, life, and again, life; truth in the delineation of character, truth in portraying passion, truth in the direction given to the reader’s sympathies. The novelist may dispose his personages as he will, but, once he has disposed them, they must act in accordance with human nature and the facts of life. Our space forbids any attempt to draw all the distinctions which it might be useful here to lay down. But the prac-

tical test we offer will be found not to fail. It is possible, indeed, that the novelist may accurately narrate facts, yet select such facts as ought not to be brought forward into observation. In some instances, these may come under the head of gross immorality, in which case they must be simply condemned and scorned. In others, they may be of an abnormal and exceptional sort, beyond the legitimate province of Art.\* Of such we cannot speak here; but nothing we could discover regarding them would lead us to doubt the general principle, that truthful delineation of life implies power in the writer and wholesomeness for the reader. With this in his hand, discreetly borne, any one may venture into the domain of fictitious literature.

We say the novelist may adjust the relations of his characters as he pleases. He is of course bound down by certain laws of probability and natural fitness; but, on the whole, he may modify circumstances to his mind, if he correctly and correspondingly modifies the actings of his personages. It is a poor error, to be turned from essential truth by the thin veil of fictitious form. Whether such a man as Othello lived or no is of little consequence; that is, it matters little whether his name was Othello, whether he was by birth a Moor, whether he served the Venetians. Wherever a warm, impulsive, passionate nature, noble and generous to the core, is subdued by love and maddened by jealousy, the Othello of Shakspeare will appear. Romeo and Juliet may never have trod the streets of Verona; but wherever love exerts its strange, transforming power, there will be Romeos and Juliefs. The intense burning of Shakspeare's truth forces its way, and shines out clear upon us, through geographical mistakes, anachronisms, and the

\* See the Essay on Ellis, Acton, and Currer Bell.

wildest play of the imagination. Prospero is none the less a man, that he dwells in an enchanted island and has dealings with Ariel and Caliban. The angelic love and pity which unite in the smile and the tear of Cordelia are most true. The fiendish malignity in the eye and on the brow of Iago is also, alas! true. Lear is as a great ship, tossing in a mighty wind, but in such a tempest precisely so would such a ship rock and strain.

This matter of truth in the delineation of character, is of first rate importance in estimating the value of any work of fiction. It may be of use to name a few of the more common errors fallen into in this department. In the first place, men are apt to be converted into mere embodiments of single passions. Life is represented as a wild hurly-burly of passionate excitement. No allowance, or insufficient allowance, is made for the continual small rain of custom and habit, which so cools the heated brain in every day existence. Next, there is a peculiar liability to failure, in what might be called the right depicting of silence. Men, it is well known, when they feel most deeply are not apt to be loud in the communication of their feelings. If they are men of action, they are still less likely to be loquacious. But how is the poor novelist to get on without his noisy dialogue and sounding soliloquy? Again, we meet with mere oafs and oddities, fit inmates of Bedlam, or such as inhabit travelling caravans. It cannot be doubted that these are almost entirely beyond the legitimate province of the novelist. Last of all, an error, precisely the reverse of that with which we set out, is often committed. An exclusively intellectual nature, a superhuman superiority to, or inhuman absence of, passion, is imputed to the supposititious characters.

All these errors, variously combined and modified, are

abundantly represented in the novels of the Minerva Press. That this class of novels still exists is too evident: but it does not now occupy any seat of honor, and no Monk Lewis will arise to rescue it from merited disdain. If we consider it well, we shall find that its absurdities are, on the whole, traceable to an absence of that sound, basing realism, which we have praised so highly. It exhibited, on a grand scale, the sickliness, the foolish vagaries, of an imagination not walking constantly with life. It rendered an invaluable service to criticism, by furnishing an incomparable example of those false sources of popularity, those exaggerated descriptions of passion, those morbid excitements, those modish ideals,—of honor, of beauty, of picturesqueness, of sublimity,—which may, for a time, secure unbounded success, but which, having no root in nature, are fleeting as the whims they pamper. No critic can henceforward be at a loss for specimens of sentimentality, theatricality, fustian, and the mock sublime.

Since nature alone affords inexhaustible variety, the Minerva Press novel becomes soon recognizable, by the recurring circle of its plots and characters. The book opens with an atrocious murder. A body is found in some pond, or river, or dungeon, or in the mysterious glade of some haunted wood. The reader must be particularly on his guard here against jugglery. Unless he is genuine Yorkshire, a man whom he believed dead will surely arise to his discomfiture in after days, heading some band of robbers, and performing all manner of truculent work. The reader must insist upon seeing the coffin nailed down and committed to the grave; if the death has been hanging, he must watch by the fatal tree, at least three hours, to certify himself that injured innocence is not cut down before life is extinct; he must inspect the throat,

to see that no iron ring has been inserted to cheat the hangman. However, be it agreed that there is a murder, and a mysterious one. The guilt of it somehow casts a dark shadow around some sweet Adeline or Angelina, who is either accused while innocent, or defrauded by cruel relatives who have done the deed. In process of time, some good-looking, gallant, mustachioed Herbert, or Lionel, or Clifford, rights the oppressed, sets all in train about the murder, talks the highest sentiment, and marries Angelina. This instructive narrative is, of course, enlivened by a due allotment of night attacks, tapers twinkling in ruins in lone woods, rapturous ejaculations, superhuman devotions, and valiant deaths. The novelist amends nature, but not in a cunning or admirable manner; not in accordance with the deeper laws of nature itself, with which it is well for Art always to consort, but in accordance with the requirements of mode, in subservience to the trick o' the time. He improves men in the manner of the applauded French dramatist, who made men of the old Romans, by putting them in court dresses and presenting them at Versailles. To this class of novels appears to belong the whole series bearing the title of *Mysteries*, whether of Paris, of London, or Udolpho. *Requiescant!*

The three greatest living novelists are Mr. Dickens, Sir Edward Lytton Bulwer, and Mr. Thackeray.

We cannot undertake to say how much of the popularity of Mr. Dickens is owing to that exertion of his genius which is in itself highest, and how much to that large class of cases, in which, as must appear to a sound criticism, he has, if not subjected his genius to dishonor, at least permitted it to indulge in child's play. It is not for him to depend on the delineation of those personal eccentricities, which Sterne called hobby-horses, Jonson humors and which Mr.

Macaulay has so finely characterized in his essay on Fanny Burney. The Minerva Press itself might be challenged to produce, from a like number of volumes, a number of oafs, deformed persons, idiots, and monomaniacs, equal to that which can be collected from the works of Mr. Dickens. Consider the fat boy in *Pickwick*. What an exquisite observation was required, in order to discriminate from his fellows that delicately marked character; what a fine touch was necessary to set distinctly on the canvas that instructive and charming personage! Tupman is simply a man of "humor" in Ben Jonson's sense. So is Winkle. Turning to the author's later works, the same characteristic is presented. Skimpole, in *Bleak House*, is an oddity. Richard is a nonentity, with a foible or two which might have cost him his freedom and secured him lodging in a lunatic asylum. The little mad woman, the repulsive being who is destroyed by spontaneous combustion, the brutalized old miser, and so on, all belong to the same class. Boythorn must have a canary to perch about his person. Jarndyce must have idiosyncrasies about the growlery and the east wind. Surely Mr. Dickens does not confer the highest honor upon his genius, when he sets it to such tickling of the fancy as this.

And his genius is worthy of honor. No writer could be named on whom the indefinable gift has been more manifestly conferred. His early works are all aglow with genius. The supreme potency with which he commands it, is shown in the total absence of effort, in the classic chasteness and limpid flow, of thought, fancy, and diction. You are in a meadow just after dawn; the flowers are fresh as if they had awakened from slumber, and the dew is on them all. A word, an idea, a glimpse of beauty, is always at hand; the writer never tarries a moment; yet there is no display,

no profusion, of opulence. You do not see him waving the wand ; the tear or the smile is on your cheek before you are aware.

The distinctive power of Dickens lies, we think, in a sympathy of extraordinary range, exquisite delicacy, and marvellous truth. He does not so much look, with steady, unparticipating gaze, until he knows and remembers the exact features of life : he feels. With all human sorrow he could weep ; with all human mirth he could laugh ; and when he came to write, every emotion he aimed at exciting was made sure, by being first experienced in his own breast. It was not with the individual man, in the wholeness of his life, in the depths of his identity, that he naturally concerned himself. It was kindness, rather than the one kind man, that he saw. It was mirth, rather than the whole character which is modified by humor. Qualities, capacities, characteristics, rather than complete men, glassed themselves in the mirror of his clear and open soul. With all his accuracy in detailed portraiture, it is a superficial perception of the order of his genius, which does not see that its power rested naturally less on realism, than on a peculiar, delicate, and most captivating idealization. Pickwick, at least in the whole earlier part of his history, is an impossible personage. He belongs to broad farce. But we laugh at his impossible conversation with the cabman. We laugh at his impossible credulity as he listens to Jingle. We laugh at his impossible simplicity at the review. The far-famed Sam Weller, too, corresponds to no reality. The Londoner born and bred is apt to be the driest and most uninteresting of beings. All things lost for him the gloss of novelty when he was fifteen years old. He would suit the museum of a *nil admirari* philosopher, as a specimen, shrivelled and adust, of the ultimate result of his principle.

But Dickens collected more jokes than all the cabmen in London would utter in a year, and bestowed the whole treasure upon Sam. His eye was far too acute for the comical to let it rest on any one funny man. In the case of those of his characters whom we are simply to admire and love, the same distinctive mode of treatment is exhibited. Rose Maylie and Esther Summerson are breathing epitomes of the tendernesses, the sweetesses, the beauties, of life. Oliver Twist concentrates the single good qualities of a hundred children. The kind-hearted man, Dickens's stock character, be his name Pickwick, Jarndyce, or Clennam, seems always radically the same, and corresponds well enough with our theory. Perhaps it is essential deficiency in the highest power of individualization, which drives Mr. Dickens, it may be unconsciously, to affix, by way of labels, to the personages of his story, those insignificant peculiarities which all can perceive.

Amid the tumult and distracting blaze of his fame, one is by no means safe from the blunder of overlooking the kernel of genuine and precious humanity, of honest kindness, of tender yet expansive benignity, which is in the centre of Dickens's being. His nature must originally have been most sweetly tuned. He must from the first have abounded in those qualities, which are so beautiful and winning when combined with manly character and vigorous powers; a cheerful gentleness, a loving hopefulness, a willingness to take all things and men for the best, an eye for the loveable; such a disposition as one finds in Goldsmith, a passionate admiration of happy human faces, a delight in the sports and laughter of children. He has always, too, been earnestly desirous to promote the welfare of men, to remove abuses, to do practical good. In the conduct of *Household Words*, it is easy to

see, he has ever had his eye on the practical, coming down heartily now on one social wrong or absurdity, now on another, the manner perhaps not always unexceptionable, the spirit always right.

His stepping forward to aid the Administrative Reform Association was very characteristic, and strikingly indicated the practicality and nobleness of his nature. That miserable association could expose the evils of maladministration only as the Helot could expose the evils of drunkenness. But Dickens could not sit apart in the approved literary fashion. When men arose visibly, and declared it their wish and endeavor to bring talent into the councils of the nation, they could not, of course, look for any aid from him who had been preaching hero-worship and the importance of finding talent for the nation all his days. Mr. Carlyle was quiet. Mr. Maurice published a weak and windy pamphlet, to the effect, of course, that you both should and should not support Administrative Reform. Dickens simply attempted to render some practical assistance. Thus he has ever acted. A pure white flame of ambition to do practical good has ever burned steadily in his breast, and no blustering applause, no favoring fortune, could dim its brightness. It is a consideration of this fact, associated with that of his warm and generous sympathy with every emotion he believes at once noble and sincere, which makes it so mournful that Dickens has never really in any sense known what true evangelical Christianity is. The most earnest and exalted feeling that dwells in the human breast is to him strange and inconceivable. He has had no glimpse of the beauty and joy of holiness. The zeal which has sent hundreds from the luxuries and adulations of civilization, to die, with wasted cheek and burning brow, on the sterile sands of moral and physical desolation,

is to him a delusion and absurdity. The delight that can be found in the sabbatic calm of devotion, the solace and blissful rest of worship, are to him hypocritical affectations or wholly unknown. He has indeed felt his heart drawn out in sympathy towards the perfect humanity of the Saviour, towards His tender compassion and infinite self-sacrificing love: but of the religion of Jesus in its truest form now extant he knows only a painful and revolting caricature.

Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton seems to have been adapted by nature to succeed as a novelist; and he has succeeded. The characteristic of his mind is diffused and comprehensive energy. Neither emotionally nor intellectually, is Sir Edward's mind determined, with overwhelming force, in one direction. The result has been that neither in the province of pure imagination, nor in that of pure intellect, has he attained the highest degree of excellence. As a thinker, men will not accept him for a guide; as a poet, he has failed. The novel is in some respects a debatable region, between the spheres of the philosophic thinker and the poet. In the department of the novel he has accordingly won very distinguished honor. The creations of his fertile mind, decked out in the fairest colors, float between the domains of unimaginative prose and truly imaginative poetry. The rhythmic melody, the heaven-kindled enthusiasm, the deep, unfeigned faith, which pervade the prose of Milton are absent from his works; the penetrating logic of Butler, the determined inquisition of Foster, are alike foreign to him; but his prose holds in solution about as much poetry as prose can, and his novels contain about as much thought as readers will endure.

The special ability of Bulwer appears to lie in the delineation of that passion with which the novel is so deeply

concerned, the passion of love. All true and manly passions, let it be said, are honored and illustrated in his pages. But he stands alone among novelists of his sex in the portraiture of love, and specially of love in the female breast. The heroism, the perfect trust the strength in death, are painted by him with a sympathetic truth for which we know not where to seek a parallel. The effect of Eugene Aram's speech at his trial, upon Madeline, his betrothed,—the calm, beautiful, satisfied smile, which lit up her wan features,—is a golden letter from the very handwriting of nature. Then, where, out of Shakspeare, can we find such a series of female portraits as those in *Rienzi*? One scarce knows to which of the masterly delineations to accord the palm. There is the weak, womanly Adeline, strong only in love, able to die beautifully, but not to live well. In Irene, there is love's complete, ineradicable devotion, all-subduing, spontaneous, self-sacrificing. In Nina, proud love gazes, self-reliant, and self-satisfied, on all the world around, but sinks in womanly tenderness on the breast of the loved one. Adeline is the soft, flower-like woman, growing fair in the calm summer radiance, but withering in the wintry blast. Irene is the human angel, of whom poets have so long sung. Nina is the queen, ready to live with, or die for, her husband-king. Rienzi himself is nobly imagined, endeavoring to tread the surges and engulfed.

Mr. Thackeray is, as a novelist, so pointed and unmistakable a contrast to Mr. Dickens, that it is interesting to find them writing at the same time. Thackeray is as little of an idealizer as it seems possible to be, if you write novels at all. He cuts into conventionalism so daringly, that you fear sometimes, as when he gives you a novel without a hero, that he goes too far, and puts in peril the essence of

his Art. If he does idealize, it is not in the manner of Dickens, but in one strikingly different. He selects characters as Dickens selects characteristics. But he depends for success not on the power of his personages to evoke sympathy, negative or positive, but on their strict correspondence with fact. It cannot, perhaps, be said that he, any more than Mr. Dickens, reaches the Shakspearean substratum of character. His eye is that of an artist. It has been trained to take in the whole aspect of the outer man, not only in the minutiae of his dress, but in the whole monotonous circumstance of his every day life. His popularity is the most powerful evidence to which one could easily point, of the capacity residing in the exhibition of bare, or even repulsive fact, to interest mankind. It is said that Thackeray abandoned the career of an artist, because, according to his own avowal, he could only caricature. He felt the absence of the higher idealizing power. His novels exhibit the radical qualities which would have distinguished his pictures. It is not emotionally that we regard them. They call forth no glow of admiration, no warm, loving sympathy, no wonder, no reverence. He makes his appeal to sterner, colder powers, to reflection, to the cynic's philosophy, to contempt. It may be better, higher, more noble and self-denying, in him, to do so; but the fact is patent. And its inevitable consequence has been and will be, a popularity not so wide, a command over the heart not so great, as those of men who permit fancy to lay on color, and imagination to heighten life. The non-existent Pickwick will always be more deeply loved than the actual Dobbin. The positive folly and knavishness of Job and Jingle will always interest more than the dismally negative stupidity of Jos. The metallic heartlessness, the machine-like selfishness, of Becky, marvel-

lous, inimitable, as that portrait is, will neutralize all her cleverness in attempting to awaken so warm an interest as Rose Maylie, Nancy, or Esther Summerson. Facts of perfect notoriety bear out this view. Thackeray owes his popularity in great measure to reviewers. The men who were not in the way of experiencing emotion recognized his power. The clever young fellows of a satirical cast, laboring under the misfortune, painfully conscious to themselves, of being before their age, were all on his side. Currer Bell, with woman's vehemence and woman's cordiality, made up her mind that he was a great teacher, come with some profound and important message for his generation; and, having made up her mind, she emphatically announced it. Of truth, whether intellectual or ethical, the works of Thackeray contain, demonstrably and indubitably, but a superficial film. But the voice of Currer Bell was heard, and the trumpetings of reviewers, the applause of knowing young men, and other causes, gradually brought him into notice. Thackeray became the fashion. Dickens owed as little of his popularity to reviewers as the Great Unknown or the Oxford Graduate. It must not be, from this, inferred that Mr. Dickens is to be set before Mr. Thackeray. The reverse might, indeed, be argued, although we do not intend to argue either. Mr. Thackeray succeeded, without any aid, in obtaining an audience, select it is true, but so cultivated and influential, that, somewhat as in the case of Wordsworth, the nation at large was forced to acknowledge him. Those who could find satisfaction in the uncompromising recital of nature's facts thronged around him.

If it were asked what one aspect of life Mr. Thackeray has distinctively exhibited, the answer could be given in one word,—the trivial aspect. The characters he draws

are neither the best of men nor the worst. But the atmosphere of triviality which envelopes them all was never before so plainly perceivable. He paints the world as a great *Vanity Fair*, and none has done that so well.

The realism of Thackeray can hardly fail to have a good effect in fictitious literature. It represents the extreme point of reaction against the false idealism of the *Minerva* Press. It is a pre-Raphaelite school of novel writing. And as pre-Raphaelitism is not to be valued in itself, so much as in being the passage to a new and nobler ideal, the stern realism of Thackeray may lead the way to something better than itself.

We found that the novel occupies a distinct and legitimate place among the forms of human exertion, and we cannot but deem it a crude and shallow error to pronounce upon it a sentence of indiscriminating condemnation. The man who looks resolutely for truth, and bids away from him any feeble desire to be merely amused, may derive important information as to his time, and valuable knowledge of human nature, by a heedful and limited study of modern novels. But, on the whole, our decision would be that the more limited this study is the better. Converse with rugged fact, whether of history or science, is what, beyond question, most effectually braces and nourishes the mind. If the tendency of the time were to strike its roots into the rock, and not to seek the soft sunshine above, one might freely advise indulgence in light reading. But since the tendency on this side is by no means likely to run to excess, and since the studious facilitation of mental exercise, and the habitual use of intellectual stimulants, are exceedingly apt to enervate and destroy the mind, our final counsel is to lay, as much as may be, the novel on the shelf.

## VIII.

### ELLIS, ACTON, AND CURRER BELL.

EVEN while the heart of the British nation is filled to overflowing by one great anguish and one great hope, we cannot doubt that a thrill of real sorrow will pass to every corner of the land with the tidings that Mrs. Nicholls, formerly Charlotte Bronte, and known to all the world as Currer Bell, is no more. But a few months ago, we heard of her marriage. It became known, with a smile of happy surprise, that the merciless derider of weak and insipid suitors had found a lord and master, that the hand which drew the three worshipful ecclesiastics, Malone, Donne, and Sweeting, had been locked at the altar in that of a curate. And already the smile fades away in the sound of her funeral knell, leaving us to reflect, that all of fruit and flower which time might have matured in the garden of her genius has been nipped by the frost of death. There is something which strikes us as peculiarly touching in the death of Currer Bell. She seemed so full of animation, of vigor; life danced like wine in her veins: all she said was so fresh and stirring; the child-look, taking this for a grand world, worth living in, no place for whining, was still on her face. The brave little woman! — in whose works you could not point to a slovenly line, to an obscure or tarrying idea. One thought of her as combining the iron will of

her little Jane, with the peerless nature of her Shirley, the beautiful pantheress, the forest-born. She could have stood out under the lightning, to trace, with firm pencil, its zig-zags of crackling fire. And now she too is but a few handfuls of white dust! Her step will never more be upon the loved wolds of Yorkshire and the broad moors which she made classic by her genius.

“Her part in all the pomp that fills  
The circuit of the summer hills  
Is that her grave is green.”

It is a trite, yet ever a suggestive remark, that the variety of nature is infinite. You have been watching the sun, when, as if in love’s changefulness, he smiled from behind April clouds on the awakening earth. Those evanescent lights on lawn and lea, those bright gleams on the distant river, that fantastic sport of the sunlight, kindling its broad and silvery illumination, burst after burst, amid the mountain mist, will never be seen again. Every effect of nature is solitary. Each star has its own twinkle, every lily of the field its peculiar and unshared beauty. The Hand whose touch is perfection repeats not its strokes. But, without inquiring what specifically is that mystic thing called genius, it is universally conceded, that it is of its essential nature to be, in a peculiar sense, unexampled and alone. Whether it be a positive addition to the ordinary complement of human faculty, or whether it be some new and cunning harmony, some delicate balancing, some exquisite sharpening, of the ordinary mental powers, it is at least agreed that, from the eye in which men discern genius, there falls over the world a light whose very novelty urges to the term. It has been said by Coleridge, that the effect of genius on its possessor is to perpetuate, in mature age, the

wakeful curiosity, the fresh enjoyment, the loving surprise, with which healthful childhood gazes on the new world; to enable a man to see, in the clear, strong light of intellectual noon-tide, the same fairness and freshness over the earth as when it lay under the dewy dawn. Be this as it may, the fact is beyond question, that there is a difference between the perceptions of such an one and those of the throng. Into recesses of the human heart, whither, erewhile, we could not penetrate, this new light guides our steps. Secret and ravishing glimpses of beauty, to which we never before thrilled, are now revealed to us. Passions which lay dormant in our breasts have been awakened ere we were aware, to overflow in tears or flash in fire. Truths which were altogether unknown, or, through custom, faded and powerless, have beamed forth with startling or alluring clearness. And when here, too, death asserts his iron rule, it is no figure of speech, but a simple statement of fact, that tones have died away which we can never hear again from the universal harp of nature, that "a light has passed from the revolving year," and that Providence has again worked out, in all it involves of responsibility and monition, those high intents for which there was sent among us an original mind. The mind of Currer Bell was assuredly original; and when we add, that the genius by which it was characterized was accompanied by an earnestness which might be called religious, and turned, by a strong human sympathy, upon the general aspects and salient points of the age, it becomes a matter of serious moment to sum up the work she has done, and estimate the lesson she has taught us. The office of criticism is twofold; it has one duty to perform for behoof of the author and another to the reader. From that point of view which every honest and individual, though nowise remarkably powerful, mind occupies, lights

of guidance or suggestion may be discerned, of value to the highest; honest criticism of living authors is therefore beyond question to be approved. But this task, and whatever of even apparent acerbity it may entail, ceases with the life of the author. As we received from the dying hand the gift to which there will be no addition, however it may be required of us to define its value, we may at least permit to criticism the tone of affection and respect. It is singularly so in the case of Currer Bell. Whatever estimate we may form of the net result of positive instruction—the actual amount of such sound available thought as will pave the highways of the world—to be found in her works, we cannot but think with tender emotion on the darkness which has so soon swallowed the brief and meteoric splendor of her career; while we should deem that reader of perceptions strangely blunted, who has never discerned that, with all her vigor and sternness, it was deep and womanly love which filled the inmost fountains of her heart. It is well, too, to remember, that it were an important mistake to test the value of any work, or series of works, by the mere logical truth they contain. The true, the beautiful, and the good, are inalienably allied. In the immeasurable system of education which nature has constructed around us in this world, their conscious or unconscious influences are perpetually blended. He who came to unfold celestial and unattainable truth, deemed not His teaching complete, until He turned the eyes of His disciples on the loveliness of the lily and the gay carelessness of the birds. Every tone of true pathos, every revealing glance by which a new aspect of nature's loveliness opens on our eyes—all that tends, in what way soever, to make us nobler, gentler, better—must be reckoned in the account of what an author has conferred upon us.

The name of Currer Bell has constantly been associated with those of her two sisters, Emily and Anne, known in the literary world as Ellis and Acton Bell. The three were the daughters of a clergyman of the Church of England, who, as we learn from the newspapers, still "at Haworth, near Keighley, in Yorkshire," survives his wife and all his children. Genius, as has not unfrequently happened, was, in the case of the three sisters, associated with the seeds of fatal disease. Perhaps our whole literary annals will show no more touching episode than that on which the leaf has just been turned by the death of Currer Bell. It is our present purpose to treat chiefly of the works of this last, but we shall be pardoned for making allusion to her sisters.

Emily Bronte, author of *Wuthering Heights*, was, we have no hesitation in saying, one of the most extraordinary women that ever lived. We have felt strongly impelled to pronounce her genius more powerful, her promise more rich, than those of her gifted sister, Charlotte. For accepting this avowal, the reader will be somewhat prepared, by perusing the following sentences, from the biographic notice, brief, but of thrilling interest, of her two sisters, given to the world by Currer Bell:—"My sister Emily first declined. The details of her illness are deep-branded in my memory; but to dwell on them, either in thought or narrative, is not in my power. Never in all her life had she lingered over any task that lay before her, and she did not linger now. She sank rapidly. She made haste to leave us. Yet, while physically she perished, mentally she grew stronger than we had yet known her. Day by day, when I saw with what a front she met suffering, I looked on her with an anguish of wonder and love. I have seen nothing like it; but, indeed, I have never seen

her parallel in anything. Stronger than a man, simpler than a child, her nature stood alone. The awful point was, that, while full of ruth for others, on herself she had no pity; the spirit was inexorable to the flesh; from the trembling hand, the unnerved limbs, the faded eyes, the same service was exacted as they had rendered in health."

The picture thus vividly drawn of a frail form standing up undaunted in the scowl of death, should be kept before us as we turn to the work left us by Ellis Bell. It were a strange and surely a distempered criticism which hesitated to pass sentence of condemnation on *Wuthering Heights*. We have no such hesitation. Canons of art sound and imperative, true tastes and natural instincts, of which these canons are the expression, unite in pronouncing it unquestionably and irremediably monstrous. If there is any truth or indication of truth in all that the most artistic of nations alleged concerning the line of beauty, if it is true that in every work of art, however displayed, we must meet the proofs of moderation, of calmness, of tempered and mastered power; if it is a reasonable demand that the instances of nature's abortion, from which we would turn away in the street, objects and incidents which awake no higher emotion than abhorrent disgust, be honored with no embalming rites, but left to be taken out of our sight, like dead dogs and carrion, by that nature which never perpetuates what is gross or noisome; this work must be condemned. On the dark brow and iron cheek of Heathcliff, there are touches of the Miltonic fiend; but we shrink in mere loathing, in "unequivocal contempt," from the base wretch who can use his cruelty as the tool of his greed, and whose cruelty itself is so unredeemed by any resistance or stimulant, as to expend itself on a dying son or a girl's poodle. There are things

which the pen of history cannot be required to do more than touch on and pass by. We desire not admittance into the recesses of the palace of Sujah Dowlah, we will not penetrate the privacy of the Cæsars. If the historic artist must at times show us the darkest evil, that we may avoid it, or sweep it from the earth, neither his nor any other art can altogether forego the glorious privilege of washing its creations in pure water, and shunning, at least, the foul and offensive. The whole atmosphere, too, of this fiction is distempered, disturbed, and unnatural. Fever and malaria are in the air. The emotions and the crimes are on the scale of madness; and, as if earthly beings, and feelings called terrestrial, were not of potency sufficient to carry on the exciting drama, there are dangerous, very ghostly personages, of the spectral order, introduced, and communings held with the spirit world which would go far to prove Yorkshire the original locality of spirit-rapping. All this is true, and no reader of the book will deem our mode of expressing it severe. Yet we have perfect confidence in pointing to *Wuthering Heights*, as a work containing evidence of powers it were perhaps impossible to estimate, and mental wealth which we might vainly attempt to compute. A host of Titans would make wild work, if directed by a child to overturn the mountains; a host of dwarfs would do little good or harm in any case; but bring your Titans under due command, set over them a judgment that can discern and command, and hill will rise swiftly over hill, till the pyramid is sealing the sky. The powers manifested in this strange book seem to us comparable to a Titan host; and we know no task beyond their might, had they been ruled by a severe taste and discriminating judgment. The mere ability to conceive and depict, with strength so unwavering and clearness so vivid, that wild

group of characters, the unmeasured distance into which recedes all that is conventional, customary, or sentimental, the tremendous strength and maturity of the style, would be enough to justify our words. The very absurdities and exaggerations of the construction lend their testimony here. Not for a moment, with such materials, could the aim of art have been attained, could belief, in some sense and for some space, have been produced, save by commanding powers. It may be the wild and haggard pageantry of a dream at which we gaze, but it is a dream we can never forget. Though the dissent and denial of our reason are, when we pause, explicit, we no sooner resign ourselves to the spell of the magician, than we feel powerless to disbelieve. In the strength of the assertion, we overlook its absurdity. Touching the character of Heathcliff, moreover, and, with less expressness, of that of Cathy Earnshaw, we have a remark to make, which will extend to certain of the characters of Currer Bell, and which might, we think, go far to point out a psychological defence, to be urged with some plausibility, of much that is extravagant and revolting in either case. The power over the mind of what Mr. Carlyle calls "fixed idea," is well known; the possession of the whole soul by one belief or aim produces strange and unaccountable effects, commingling strength and weakness, kindness and cruelty, and seeming, at first sight, to compromise the very unity of nature. Ellis Bell, in *Wuthering Heights*, deals with a kindred, though somewhat different phenomenon. She has not to do with intellect, but emotion. She paints the effects of one overwhelming feeling, the maniac actings of him who has quaffed one draught of maddening passion. The passion she has chosen is love. There is still a gleam of nobleness, of natural human affection, in the heart of Heathcliff in the days of his early love

for Cathy, when he rushes manfully at the bull-dog which has seized her, and sets himself, after she is safe in Thrushcross Grange, on the window ledge, to watch how matters go on, "because," says he, "if Catherine had wished to return, I intended shattering their great glass panes to a million fragments, unless they let her out." But we watch that boyish heart, until, in the furnace of hopeless and agonizing passion, it becomes as insensible to any tender emotion, to any emotion save one, as a mass of glowing iron to trickling dew. Heathcliff's original nature is seen only in the outgoing of his love towards Cathy; there he is human, if he is frenzied; in all other cases, he is a devil. As his nature was never good, as there were always in it the hidden elements of the sneak and the butcher, the whole of that semi-vital life which he retains towards the rest of the world is ignoble and revolting. His sorrow has been to him moral death. With truly diabolic uniformity, every exercise of power possible to him upon any creature, rational or irrational, Cathy, of course, excepted, is made for its torment. He seems in one half of his nature to have lost all sensibility, to be unconscious that human beings suffer pain. The great agony of passion has burned out of his bosom the chords of sympathy which linked him to his kind, and left him in that ghastly and fiendish solitude, which it is awful to dream of as a possible element in the punishment of hell. However frightful the love-scenes in the death chamber of Cathy—and we suppose there is nothing at all similar to these in the range of literature—we feel that we are in the presence of a man. When we think on his early roamings with his lost and dying love on the wild moors, we can even perceive, stealing over the heart, a faint breath of sympathy. But when he leaves the world of his real existence—the world of his love for

Cathy, whether as a breathing woman, or as the wraith which he still loves on—we shrink from him as from a corpse, made more ghastly by the hideous movements of galvanism. Somewhat different is the effect of the same passion upon Cathy. Hers was originally a brave, beautiful, essentially noble nature; through all her waywardness, we love her still; and though her passion for Heathcliff costs her her life, it never seathes and sears her soul into a calcined crag like his. To the last, her heart and imagination can bear her to the wild flowers she used to gather amid the heath; strange and wraith-like as she grows in the storm of that resistless passion, we know full well that no mean, or cruel, or unwomanly thought could enter her breast. Viewed as a psychological study of this sort, a defence might, we say, be set up for the choice of these two characters; and when thus confessedly morbid, their handling will be allowed to be masterly. Nor can it be alleged that instances of similar passion, attended by like results, are not to be met with in real life. Madness, idiocy, and death, are acknowledged to follow misguided or hopeless affection. In the case both of Cathy and Heathcliff, there was unquestionably a degree of the first. But the defence can at best be partial, for, we submit, bedlam is no legitimate sphere of art. Of one thing, however, there can be no doubt. The girl's hand which drew Heathcliff and Cathy, which never shook as it brought out those lines of agony on cheek and brow, which never for a moment lost its strength and sweep in flourish or bravura, was such as has seldom wielded either pen or pencil.

We might descant at great length on the variety of power displayed in this extraordinary book; but we should leave it without conveying an idea, even partially correct, of its general character, if we omitted to notice those

touches of nature's softest beauty, those tones of nature's softest melody, which are blended, so cunningly as to excite no sense of discord, with its general excitement and gloom. We cannot forbear quoting here a passage which seems to us deeply suggestive ; the speaker is a young girl, and he of whom she speaks a boy about her own age :—

“ One time, however, we were near quarrelling. He said the pleasantest manner of spending a hot July day was lying from morning till evening on a bank of heath in the middle of the moors, with the bees humming dreamily about among the bloom, and the larks singing high up overhead, and the blue sky and bright sun shining steadily and cloudlessly. That was his perfect idea of heaven’s happiness. Mine was, rocking in a rustling green tree, with a west wind blowing, and bright, white clouds flitting rapidly above ; and not only larks, but throstles, and black-birds, and linnets, and cuckoos, pouring out music on every side, and the moors seen at a distance, broken into cool, dusky dells ; but close by great swells of long grass undulating in waves to the breeze ; and woods, and sounding water, and the whole world awake and wild with joy. He wanted all to lie in an ecstasy of peace ; I wanted all to sparkle and dance in a glorious jubilee.”

Does this not bear witness to much ? No sympathy but that of a green heart could have won access to that child’s heaven. None but a free, and elastic, and loving nature could thus, with the inimitable touch of truth and reality, have heard, through the ear of that glad girl, in the joy-toned anthem of bird, and water, and rustling branch, the very music of heaven. The faithfulness of the picture, the perfect and effortless realization of the whole summer scene, so that we hear that west wind, and see those bright white clouds — the cumulous clouds which the summer long, are

the flocks of the west wind — and scent that bloom of the warm, waving heather, is demonstration absolutely sufficient of that inborn love of nature's joy and beauty which never yet dwelt in a narrow or unworthy breast. This short extract, too, is sufficient to prove maturity and excellence of style. There is a free, strong, graceful force in every line ; there is no dallying, no second touch ; the little scene groups itself gracefully together as if to that summer music.

We make no more than an allusion to Ellis Bell's poetry. It is characterized by strength and freshness, and by that original cadence, that power of melody, which, be it wild, or tender, or even harsh, was never heard before, and comes at first hand from nature, as her sign of the born poet. We have compared the poetry of the three sisters ; and in spite of a prevailing opinion to the contrary, we scruple not to declare, that the clear result of our examination is the conclusion that Ellis Bell's is beyond measure the best.

But, after all, we must pronounce what has been left us by this wonderful woman, unhealthy, immature, and worthy of being avoided. *Wuthering Heights*, we repeat, belongs to the horror school of fiction, and is involved in its unequivocal and unexcepting condemnation. We say not that a mind, inured to the task, cannot, by careful scrutiny and severe discrimination, derive valuable hints and important exercise from such works. You may trace and emulate strength of touch and richness of color, while you detest the subject. You may listen to snatches of woodland music, and thrill to tints of woodland beauty, in the neighborhood of the hyena's den. But we do not for this recall our condemnation. At the foot of the gallows, touches of nature's tenderness may be marked : in the pallid face of the criminal you may note workings of emotion not to be seen elsewhere. Anatomy might be studied, with both novelty

and force of instruction, in the quivering of the muscles and wrenching of the forehead of one who lay on the wheel. But it admits not of question, that the general effect of such spectacles is brutalizing, and we would therefore without hesitation terminate their publicity. On exactly the same grounds, would we bid our readers avoid works of distempered excitement. Even when such are of the highest excellence in their class, as those of Ellis Bell and Edgar Poe, we would deliberately sentence them to oblivion. Their general effect is to produce a mental state alien to the calm energy and quiet homely feelings of real life ; to make the soul the slave of stimulants, and those of the fiercest kind ; and, whatever morbid irritability may for the time be fostered, to shrivel and dry up those sympathies which are the most tender, delicate, and precious. Works like those of Edgar Poe and this *Wuthering Heights* must be plainly declared to blunt, to brutalize, and to enervate the mind. Of the poetry, also, of Ellis Bell, it must be said that it is not healthful. Its beauty is allied to that wild loveliness which may gleam on the hectic cheek, or move while it startles, as we listen to maniac ravings. And wherefore this unchanging wail, whence this perpetual and inexpressible melancholy, in the poems of one so young ? What destiny is it with which this young heart so vainly struggles, and by which it is overcome ? Is it possible that, under the sunny azure of an English sky, and while the foot is on English moors, so utter a sadness may descend on a girl, whom we expect to find "a metaphor of spring, and mirth, and gladness," the sister of the fawn and the linnet ? The spectacle is deeply touching, and, alas ! the explanation is at hand ; an explanation which, while it leaves untouched the assertion that the beauty of these poems is that of the blighted flower, changes every feeling with which we might

momentarily regard their author into pitying sorrow. Her genius was yoked with death. It never freed itself from the dire companionship, never rose into freedom and clearness. As in the old Platonic chariot, her soul, borne by her winged genius, rose strong and daring towards the empyrean ; but ere it breathed the pure serene, that black steed, which was also yoked indissolubly to the car, dragged her downwards even to the grave. Her poetry, whatever tones of true and joyful lyric music it may at intervals afford, is, as a whole, but the wild wailing melody to which was fought the battle between genius and death.

Of Anne Bronte, known as Acton Bell, we have scarce a remark to make. In her life, too, sadness was the reigning element, but she possessed no such strong genius as her sister. "Anne's character," says Currer Bell, "was more subdued ; she wanted the power, the fire, the originality of her sister, but was well endowed with quiet virtues of her own. Long-suffering, self-denying, reflective, and intelligent, a constitutional reserve and taciturnity placed and kept her in the shade, and covered her mind, and especially her feelings, with a sort of nun-like veil, which was rarely lifted." Her death is thus recorded by the same authority : — "She (Ellis) was not buried ere Anne fell ill. She had not been committed to the grave a fortnight, before we received distinct intimation that it was necessary to prepare our minds to see the younger sister go after the elder. Accordingly, she followed in the same path, with slower step, and with a patience that equalled the other's fortitude. I have said that she was religious, and it was by leaning on those Christian doctrines in which she firmly believed, that she found support through her most painful journey. I witnessed their efficacy in her latest hour and greatest trial, and must bear testimony to the calm triumph with which

they brought her through." She died May 28, 1849. The last lines written by Acton Bell are so full of pathos, awaken a sorrow so holy and ennobling, and breathe a faith so strong and tranquil, that we cannot pass them by:—

"I hoped, that with the brave and strong,  
My portion'd task might lie;

To toil amid the busy throng,  
With purpose pure and high.

But God has fix'd another part,  
And he has fix'd it well:

I said so with my bleeding heart,  
When first the anguish fell.

Thou, God, hast taken our delight,  
Our treasured hope away:

Thou bidd'st us now weep through the night,  
And sorrow through the day.

These weary hours will not be lost,  
These days of misery,

These nights of darkness, anguish-tost,  
Can I but turn to thee:

With secret labor to sustain  
In humble patience every blow;  
To gather fortitude from pain,  
And hope and holiness from woe.

Thus let me serve thee from my heart,  
Whate'er may be my written fate;  
Whether thus early to depart,  
Or yet awhile to wait.

If thou should'st bring me back to life,  
More humbled I should be;  
More wise — more strengthen'd for the strife,  
More apt to lean on thee.

Should death be standing at the gate,  
Thus should I keep my vow;  
But, Lord! whatever be my fate,  
Oh, let me serve thee now!"

"These lines written," adds Currer Bell, "the desk was closed, the pen laid aside, forever."

It may well be doubted whether any more than a faint and mournful reminiscence of Ellis and Acton Bell will survive the generation now passing away. But the case is widely different with the eldest of the sisters. Currer Bell has won for herself a place in our literature from which she cannot be deposed. Her influence will long be felt, as a strong plastic energy, in the literature of Britain and the world. The language of England will retain a trace of her genius. We have no intention, at present, to subject her works to a detailed criticism; we purpose merely to notice a few of her leading characteristics, and, listening to her words as those of one who scrupled not to assume the tone of a censor of her age, and considered every word she penned matter of conscientious regard, to endeavor to define, briefly but articulately, the worth of her teaching. Currer Bell professed to be no idle entertainer. She did not, indeed, tag on a moral to the end of her book,—else it had been little worth,—or even blazon it on its surface. But she professed to write truly, to show living men and women, meeting the exigencies, grappling with the problems of real life, to point out how the battle goes in private circles, between pretension and reality, between falsehood and truth. If we were content to listen to her as a historian, she relinquished with a smile the laurel of the romancer. She was the professed foe of conventionality, and the whole tone of her writings evinces her desire

to fling off its trammels. To what extent she succeeded we may learn as we proceed.

The style of Currer Bell is one which will reward study for its own sake. Its character is directness, clearness, force. We could point to no style which appears to us more genuinely and nobly English. Prompt and business-like, perfectly free of obscurity, refining, or involution, it seems the native garment of honest passion and clear thought, the natural dialect of men that can work and will. It reminds one of a good highway among English hills: leading straight to its destination, and turning aside for no rare glimpse of landscape, yet bordered by dewy fields, and woods, and crags, with a mountain stream here rolling beneath it, and a thin cascade here whitening the face of the rock by its side: utility embosomed in beauty. Perhaps its tone is somewhat too uniform, its balance and cadence too unvaried. Perhaps, also, there is too much of the abruptness of passion. We should certainly set it far below many styles in richness, delicacy, calmness, and grace. But there is no writer whose style can be pronounced a universal model; and for simple narrative, for the relation of what one would hear with all speed, yet with a spice of accompanying pleasure, this style is a model as nearly perfect as we can conceive. And its beauty is so genuine and honest! You are at first at a loss to account for the charm which breathes around, filling the air as with the fragrance of roses after showers; but the secret cannot long remain hidden from the poor critic, doomed to know how he is pleased. It lies in the perfect honesty, combined with the perfect accuracy, of the sympathy with nature's beauty which dwelt in the breast of the author; in the fact that she ever loved the dew-drop, the daisy, the mountain bird, the vernal branch. Uncalled for and to her

unconsciously, at the smile of sympathy, the flowers and the dew-drops come to soften and adorn her page.

Of Currer Bell's love of nature we wish we had space to speak at some length: we can offer merely one or two remarks. There is nothing so commonly mimicked, and there are few things so rarely displayed, as genuine love and accurate knowledge of nature. The truth is, nature is somewhat difficult to know: we think not of noting the tints in a picture which has hung in our eyes since childhood. And whatever may be said of universal beauty, we have become perfectly assured of this, that he who sets himself really to watch nature will find the beauty of her general aspect merely the contrast by which she illustrates her moods and moments—the every day dress by which she sets off her jewelry: and that few indications can be surer of a want of delicate appreciation of the loveliness of sky, and cloud, and mountain, than the commonplace prating about all being beautiful which we behold. Currer Bell, like her sister Ellis, gives us such pictures of nature, so detailed, so definite, so unmistakable, so fresh, that they rise before us like a reminiscence, or give us an assurance as of eyesight. We could quote, in illustration of these remarks, passage after passage of perfect truth, not in any measure the less true that the scenes described have been seen by the eye of an original imagination, or that an exquisite fancy has at times flung a pearl-wreath round the dove's neck, where nature's touches of azure and gold were already gleaming. Among the more ordinary but most easily appreciable of such passages, is that careless passing description in the third volume of *Shirley*, of the general effect of an east wind in a cloudless August sky, and the sudden change to the west:—“It was the close of August: the weather was fine—that is to say, it was very dry and

very dusty, for an arid wind had been blowing from the east this month past: very cloudless, too, though a pale haze, stationary in the atmosphere, seemed to rob of all depth of tone the blue of heaven, of all freshness the verdure of earth, and of all glow the light of day. . . . . But there came a day when the wind ceased to sob at the eastern gable of the rectory, and at the oriel window of the church. A little cloud like a man's hand arose in the west; gusts from the same quarter drove it on, and spread it wide; wet and tempest prevailed awhile. When that was over, the sun broke out genially, heaven regained its azure, and earth its green: the livid cholera-tint had vanished from the face of nature; the hills rose clear round the horizon, absolved from that pale malaria-haze." Not more true, but more rare, is the following bit of woodland painting, which, we humbly submit, is worthy of Wordsworth:—"I know all the pleasantest spots: I know where we could get nuts in nutting-time; I know where wild strawberries abound; I know certain lonely, quite untrodden glades, carpeted with strange mosses, some yellow as if gilded, some a sober gray, some gem-green. I know groups of trees, that ravish the eye with their perfect, picture-like effects: rude oak, delicate birch, glossy beech, clustered in contrast; and ash-trees stately as Saul, standing isolated, and superannuated wood-giants clad in bright shrouds of ivy." The reader of these works will know we could quote similar sketches from every chapter.

Allied with this power of original and loving observation of nature, and here naturally claiming our attention, the imaginative faculty of Currer Bell was altogether new and remarkable. It would lead us very far to discuss and determine the relations and distinctions between the powers of perception, of imagination, and of thought. We lean

to the belief, that a definite line cannot be drawn between them ; that it is not possible in every case to distinguish between the piercing glance which perceives, and the imaginative gaze which bestows ; between the strong memory which retains, and the clear conception which recalls. We doubt not that the imagination of Currer Bell was concerned in every embracing look she cast over nature ; and we should deem it a vain assay to disentangle the complexity of faculty by which so fair a variety of beauty was lured to her page. But there are effects of imagination which are unmistakably its own, where no scene or form of nature is recalled, but where, from her tints and her lines, a chosen number are selected, and the whole arranged anew by a power which we must name creative. We may falter in defining the precise faculty which enables us to paint perfectly the waving corn or the glowing garden. But we own the magic of imagination at once, when, in the midst of her gardens, or surrounded by swarthy reapers and crowned with the yellow sheaf, the Flora or the Ceres stands before us. It is to efforts of the imaginative faculty thus unmistakable, that we direct attention in the case before us. There are pieces of poetic creation in the prose works of Currer Bell, distinct, not only from the general texture of her composition, but, so far as we know, from anything in the English language. They are not of great number, but so distinct are they and striking, that every one of them could, after a single perusal of her works, be pointed out. The three pictures selected by Rochester from Jane's portfolio, the Mermaid and Nereides in *Shirley*, and a few such, complete the list. We shall select one as an example, perhaps the finest, yet closely resembling in all important particulars the others. It is the personification of nature in the second volume of *Shirley* :—

"The gray church, and grayer tombs, look divine with this crimson gleam on them. Nature is now at her evening prayers; she is kneeling before those red hills. I see her prostrate on the great steps of her altar, praying for a fair night for mariners at sea, for travellers in deserts, for lambs in moors, and unfledged birds in woods. . . . . I saw—I now see—a woman-Titan: her robe of blue air spreads to the outskirts of the heath, where yonder flock is grazing; a veil, white as an avalanche, sweeps from her head to her feet, and arabesques of lightning flame on its borders. Under her breast I see her zone, purple like that horizon; through its blush shines the star of evening. Her steady eyes I cannot picture—they are clear, they are deep as lakes, they are lifted and full of worship, they tremble with the softness of love and the lustre of prayer. Her forehead has the expanse of a cloud, and is paler than the early moon, risen long before dark gathers; she reclines her bosom on the ridge of Stilbro' Moor, her mighty hands are joined beneath it. So kneeling, face to face she speaks with God."

We have nothing in the poetry of Currer Bell to compare with this. There seems to us a grandeur of conception, a strength and sweep of line, a calm and beautiful glow of color, a Grecian harmony and finish, in the whole creation, which would render no epithet of applause extravagant. It has the unity of poetry. Had it been wrapped in a garment of metrical harmony, it would have been recognized as one of the most powerful and beautiful personifications in the range of our poetic literature. We might speak in similar terms of her pictures of the Mermaid and the Nereides. By the wizard and plastic might of her imagination, the sea-woman of the North is once more informed with life, and glares appalling from the

ridge of the wave. By the same original energy, the poetic dream of the old Greek mind is rescued from enveloping oblivion, and the daughters of Nereus, filmy as the foam amid which they glide, rise spectral before us, as they might to the eyes of the young bard of Hellas, wandering belated by the moonlit surge of the *Ægean*. Passages of solitary brilliancy are of frequent occurrence in all our more imaginative prose writers. Apostrophic bursts and long elaborate similes are abundantly to be met with. But the clear and separate creation of poetry, the group or the figure, fairly chiselled from the flawless marble and left forever in the loneliness of their beauty, we know not to have been ever formally introduced into English prose, save by Currer Bell.

The peculiar strength of Currer Bell as a novelist can be pointed out in a single word. It is that to which allusion was made in speaking of *Wuthering Heights*; the delineation of one relentless and tyrannizing passion. In hope, in ardor, in joy, with proud, entrancing emotion, such as might have filled the breast of him who bore away the fire of Jove, love is wooed to the breast. But a storm as of fate awakens: the blue sky is broken into lightnings, and hope smitten dead; and now the love which formerly was a dove of Eden is changed into a vulture, to gnaw the heart, retained in its power by bands of adamant. As the victim lies on his rock, the whole aspect of the world changes to his eye. Ordinary pleasures and ordinary pains are impotent to engage the attention, to assuage the torment. No dance of the nymphs of ocean attracts the wan eye, or for a moment turns the vulture aside. Such a passion is the love of Rochester for Jane, perhaps in a somewhat less degree, that of Jane for Rochester; such, slightly changed in aspect, is the passion beneath which

Caroline pines away, and that which convulses the brave bosom of Shirley. With steady and daring hand, Currer Bell depicts this agony in all its stages; we may weep and tremble, but we feel that her nerves do not quiver, that her eye is unfilmed. So perfect is the verisimilitude, nay the truth, of the delineation, that you cannot for a moment doubt that living hearts have actually throbbed with like passion. It is matter, we believe, of universal assent, that Currer Bell here stands almost alone among the female novelists of Britain, and we doubt whether, however they surpass her in the variety of their delineations, there is any novelist of the other sex who, in this department, has exhibited greater power.

What positive lesson, we ask finally, moral or intellectual, did Currer Bell read to her age? The question can be simply and briefly answered. In her works, there is a universal assertion of rights and emotions stamped by the seal-royal of nature, against the usurpations of avarice and mode. The passion which is kindled really by nature, though the hearts in which it glows may be far asunder, shall burn its way, through station, through prejudice, through all obstacles that can oppose it, until the fires unite, and rise upwards in one white flame. The true love of Rochester for the governess he employs, the true love of the rich and brilliant Shirley for her tutor, must finally triumph: Nature and Custom contend, and the "anarch old" goes down. It is always so; the sympathy with nature's strength and reality is unchanging. Poltroonery, too, of all sorts, baseness, feeble pretension, and falsehood, are crowned with their rightful scorn. Valor, fortitude, strength of will, and all the stalwart virtues that bear the world before them, are honored and illustrated. The great duty of submission, without fainting or murmuring, to the

decrees of Providence, is proclaimed with overwhelming power, and indeed with an iteration which makes us at times fain to cry out, that this is Currer Bell's one lecture, which we may expect at any moment to be held by the button-hole to hear. "I disapprove everything utopian. Look life in its iron face, stare reality out of its brassy countenance :" this is the gist of all her moralizing. The lesson, however, belongs to the stern and practical ethics of life, not easily rendered trite, and we deem worthy of special remark a particular instance in which we have it, or one nearly allied to it, is enforced ; in all the fiction we ever read, we could point to no case of instruction, at once so practical, so impressive, and so precious. It is a particular touch in the delineation of the triumph of resolution and principle in the breast of Jane Eyre. The conflict is at its height. Reason and conscience falter, and will give no clear decision ; they seem inclined rather to regard surrender as a less evil than the possible suicide of Rochester. Then it is that the epic heroism of little Jane, while it reaches the climax of its grandeur, reaches also the height of its practical value. "I had no solace from self-approbation : not even from self-respect. I had injured—wounded—left my master. I was hateful in my own eyes. Still, I could not turn, nor retrace one step. God must have led me on. As to my own will or conscience, impassioned grief had trampled one, and stifled the other." The same phase of her agony had been presented shortly before, and perhaps with still greater force. We believe this no mere imaginary picture. There are situations in life when blackness is overhead and desolation within, and not anything remains but an indestructible, unaccountable, scarce conscious instinct of duty ; when the soul may be likened to one who clings to a rope in a swoon, while a great billow

goes over him, and his only chance is, that the *senseless* hand still holds spasmodically on. In the hour of sorest need, the figure of that invincible girl may rise, with a look of real and potent encouragement, to steel many a heart to defy the devil to the last.

The assertion of what we may call the sacredness of natural emotion, in its natural modes of action, made by Currer Bell, merits an attention altogether peculiar. There are few subjects on which we would speak with greater emphasis. It relates to a part of the system of natural ethics which Christians are most apt to neglect, but of which the neglect is as pernicious as it is indefensible. Has it not a somewhat singular sound, to talk of the Christian duty of permitting in the formation of the nuptial tie (nay, of enjoining and insisting on) the free play of the natural affections? Is it not widely customary, for men and women, ready to die in defence of Christian principle, anxiously and prayerfully shaping their lives by the teaching of the New Testament, either themselves to marry, or to lend their sanction to marriages, in which it is well known and deliberately contemplated, that no feeling of intense attachment, no love, exists in the breast of either party? Men whom it would be hard not to call excellent, clergymen especially, regard entrance upon the married state as a part of the formal and mechanical business of life. At a certain age, the duties of the parish are entered upon, the manse is furnished, and then, for various reasons, of comfort, of economy, of respectability, a wife is "taken." Young persons of the other sex are, so far as we can judge, equally apt to look upon marriage with no sense of the fact that affection is here one with duty, and its absence a sin. Parents, again, as will occur to every one, though of sincere and habitual piety, though desirous of promoting the best

interests of their children, and while deeply concerned that their daughters are wedded to men of position and means, of integrity and ability, nay, of religion, will pass over, or lightly shuffle by, all questions touching capacity of affection or sympathy of nature. Yet one would think a single look beneath the outermost vail of appearance might convince all that, with the answers practically rendered to such questions as these, is vitally and indissolubly connected the real happiness, or the bitter misery, of after life. One would imagine, too, that it required no very penetrating inquisition into the laws of things, to discover that, on the original settlement of such questions, depend unnumbered influences, of the most intimate and inevitable kind, affecting the moral and religious condition of the community. One would think, last of all, that it required a studious and habitual opposition to the plainest teaching of the gospel, or a blindness wholly marvellous to the nature of that teaching, to persist in meeting with a direct negative the Christian view of marriage. The teachings of nature and of Christianity are here in the strictest and most beautiful accordance. Nature and experience testify, for their part, that a lifetime of cohabitation, where there is no natural, mutual, overpowering attraction, no love, is not only a lifetime of chronic suffering, an imprisonment in "polar ice," but a condition in which each noble and genial emotion is met by a subtle poison, pervading the moral atmosphere, by a biting frost-wind, where it ought to have found the balmiest sunshine, by chilling and withering sleet, where nature would have prepared for it gentle, fostering rain. Looking beyond the individual victims of such a rebellion against nature, to those to whom they are related as parents, the aspects of the case, holding still by the light of mere experience and common sense, are, if possible, still

more obvious and impressive. The education of the family circle, no one will dispute, is the most important of all. It may not be a matter of so common reflection, that the part of this education, which consists in express precepts and oral instruction, is of trivial importance compared with the silent, practical education of parental life, from the responsibility of which the parent never escapes for a moment, and of which the influence, searching and perpetual, can be counteracted by no set words, however earnest and well studied! If the parents are not united by a love which, in its fervid intensity, sets them apart from the rest of the world, and causes every other earthly feeling to revolve in an orbit comparatively remote, the unity of the family circle is broken. A fatal element insinuates itself into the affection with which the children are regarded. They are taught by the presence of no mighty and beautiful emotion in those to whom they look up, to know the happiness of pure affection, to admire it, to aspire after it. For the first few years of life, the parent is to the child, with hardly any qualification, in the place of God. The home is the first temple in which man worships. The parent is the impersonation of perfection. And if, in striving after that perfection, as the child will do almost before he can speak, he is guided by no melodious harmony of parental love, embracing his parents and uniting in himself, his whole nature, intellectual as well as moral, may from the first be stunted. The influences of which we speak are not such as can be minutely defined: could they be so, they would be slight. But it is impossible, on fair consideration, to deny their supreme power. It is the enactment of nature, visible in every department of the physical universe, that the life of the parent, in its substance and its form, be, so to speak, stamped upon the offspring. No discordance can enter into parental exist-

ence, without marking itself in the character and life of the child. The assumptions of mode and affectation may fall away, but the deepest nature will be transmitted. The face may be unmoved before the world, the breast may lie, sternly placid, over the beating, burning heart, but a drop of the internal agony, with all its power to paralyze emotion and embitter life, will find its way into the bosom of the offspring. And if all this belongs to the most practical and homely truth of nature, Christianity is not less but more explicit. It is strange and anomalous that ideas, so poor and dishonoring, of the formation of the nuptial relationship should prevail, considering the august and peculiar place accorded to that relationship by Scripture. The family relations are those habitually chosen to illustrate the most sublime conceptions which are brought by Scripture before the mind of man,—the relations between the Persons of the Trinity and the Saviour and his church. St. Paul does not scruple to make the love entertained by Christ for his redeemed the model and measure of connubial affection. The Creator in Paradise gave this feeling the express pre-eminence over all others: the Saviour affirmed his words. It is impossible to reflect earnestly on the deep-lying and wonderful threads of connection, which run through Scripture and human history, through Christianity and nature, without perceiving that the emotion, crowned by the Creator in Paradise, signally honored by the Saviour, and measured by Paul by an infinite standard, is that which plays, in the natural world, so strange and prominent a part; grouping around itself all comedy and tragedy, the life of literature and art, the source of half the nobleness and half the crime of human history, unique in its nature and irresistible in its influence, undefinable by any but in some way conceived of by all, and known distinctively by

the name of love. It admits of no doubt that the existence of this emotion is the sign appointed by God in nature for the formation of the nuptial tie, that this is one of the great correspondences which pervade the system of things, as that of reason to truth, that of conscience to rectitude, that of vision to the objects of perception, that of climate to natural productions. Without this affection the nuptial unity is impossible; marriage, in the sense of nature and Scripture, cannot be. And yet the Christian world very generally, if not very explicitly, coincides with the idea of Johnson that marriages might be well enough arranged by the chancellor! That the rest of the world is, in all practical points, as much to blame here as that calling itself distinctively Christian, is probably the fact. But it is to books not belonging to strictly Christian literature, that one would point, for the most emphatic assertion of theoretic truth in the matter. In the conclusion of his essay on Mirabeau, Mr. Carlyle takes occasion, from certain circumstances in the history of his hero, to set his fiery finger on this great social commandment. And we concentrate in brief compass a critique on the writings of Currer Bell, when we say that their central doctrine for the reconstitution of social ethics, their one remedy for the cure of social ills, is the permission of free play to the passion of love, and the abolition of its counterfeits.

There being, therefore, much of what is stirring and healthful in the works of Currer Bell, can we close with a declaration that the region in which her characters move is the highest and purest, and that she has solved, or hinted how we may solve, the social problems which at present confront the earnest and practical mind? We cannot. We must record our distinct and unalterable negative in either case. The truth she proclaims is one sided. Her

scheme of life is too narrow. The pleasures and sufferings of existence do not all depend on one emotion though it be that of love, on one passion though itself be right. Her works are the ovation of passion. It may be true, it may be noble, it may be allied with principle, but Passion is ever the conqueror and king. The joys of existence which have any real point, the sorrows which have any real bitterness, are alike in the dispensation of Passion. Is more than a word necessary to make this assertion good? Who sees not more to be desired in the very anguish of the love of Caroline or Shirley, than in the blanched existence of Miss Ainley? Do we not mark St. John Rivers go away, joyless and marble-cold, on his high mission, while Passion welcomes back Jane to his burning, bliss-giving arms? Where Passion appears, all becomes real and alive: where Passion is not, the widest philanthropy, the holiest devotion, are powerless to confer happiness. And shall we thus crown Passion, and bend the knee before him? By no means. Passion, when alone, is essentially and ignobly selfish. Despite a barren kindness of heart, the existence of Rochester is utterly selfish. *His* luckless marriage, *his* impure loves, *his* interesting sorrows, have eaten up the substance of his life. One would say, were he a sound example, that a man was linked by no duties to his fellows, that, in a world like this, a man, without being coward or caitiff, could be occupied solely by self. "Love thy neighbor as thyself:" know thyself a unit among millions: perform the duties God has assigned thee towards thyself, but value not that self beyond any other of a million units. How thorough the reversal of the whole manner of Mr. Rochester's existence, which would have been wrought by the simple adoption, as its leading principle, of this divine motto of Christian philanthropy, in

which is bound up the regeneration of the world! There *must* be a love higher than that of mere passion. There must be joys, moral, intellectual, spiritual, whose pure oil can make the lamp of life burn as clearly and cheerfully as the flame of passion, and far more beautifully. To say otherwise, were to utter a libel upon nature, to impugn the justice and love of God. Of a love, pure and lofty, allying us to God and man, illumining the universe around us with the mingled lights of heaven and home, Currer Bell gives no representation, nay, she gives a caricature, which, while wondrous in execution, is utterly false. St. John had no affection for Jane which could be named love. It is to be regretted that she did not think of cutting short all his fine speeches, by simply pointing him to the measure allotted to connubial affection by Paul, and telling him that, unless he felt within him the power to love her as his own soul, nay, with an unutterable force of affection to be compared with the infinite love of Christ for his own body, his own church, he committed a *sin* in asking her to become his wife. There is an altar on which terrestrial and celestial love can blend their fires. If passion is the whole of love, it must debase and not ennoble.

When we speak of those practical problems, on which Currer Bell has touched, but which she has not solved, we refer specially to the dreary pictures she draws in *Shirley* of the social standing of woman. Marriage, we are told, is the one hope of the great majority of England's daughters, a hope destined in countless cases to be never realized. A youth of scheming inanity, deriving a faint animation from this hope, must fade into a blighted and solitary age. The authority of a lady may be taken as conclusive of the state of the case here; but when we assent to her allegations, and paragraph after paragraph has impressed them on our

minds, we have no more, by way of remedy, than a sentence of general and valueless exhortation to fathers to cultivate the minds of their daughters. There is nothing in the works of Currer Bell to assure us that any amount of cultivation will produce fresh and satisfying happiness, unless that one wish which she points to is gratified. She indicates no fields of pleasure accessible to all. She exhibits not the means of the cultivation she commends, and leaves us to guess the connection between culture and enjoyment. The hand of this gifted woman had power, we think, to paint a daughter of England gladdening and beautifying her existence, though the light of passion never rose upon her path. But this she has not done.

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The publication of Mrs. Gaskell's most interesting and valuable biography of Currer Bell might seem to require the addition of certain qualifying remarks to the preceding. Not the slightest modification, however, has been felt to be necessary in the view given of the genius and aims of the authoress. But there are two circumstances brought to light in this biography, which have, in themselves, an interest and importance justifying particular observation. The first is, that the artistic instinct of Currer Bell was, in one chief instance, more piercing and accurate, more strictly in accordance with the verities of life and nature, than that general mode of thought which ruled her habitual and practised opinions. The central doctrine of her works was found to be the sacredness of the natural affections in the formation of the marriage relationship—the necessity of

the existence of a distinctive feeling, called love, in every such case. It is impossible to imagine that, in those works, this necessity is asserted in reference to the man, but not in reference to the woman. All the power of the authoress is exerted to set in strong colors the sense which Shirley has of the dishonor done to her and to himself by Robert Moore, when he proposes to marry her without loving her: and all that is claimed for woman in what Currer Bell wrote would be at once given up, by the concession, that it would have been right and natural in Shirley to marry Moore, while feeling towards him as he felt towards her. But when Currer Bell became Charlotte Bronte, when she ceased to be the artist and became the woman, she made this concession. In so many words, she declared that "respect," entertained by a woman for a man, was a feeling which could justify her in marrying him. Moore respected Shirley very deeply; and Currer Bell pours out on him in full measure the burning fountains of her scorn, for having, in that state of feeling, proposed marriage; but the heart of Shirley was not so sacred or precious a gift, but that it might have been given with a cold hand; not love but respect would have justified *her* in blending her being with another. But Charlotte Bronte shall not prevail against Currer Bell: this commonplace surrender to the dreariest working of social mechanism shall not invalidate the magnificent protests of genius. The second circumstance revealed by the biography of Currer Bell which demands a word of notice, is antithetically contrasted with the first. In the one, the woman was less true than the authoress: in the other, the authoress is less true than the woman. In words clear and forcible as those which it was her habit to use, Charlotte Bronte expressed her conviction, that a noble and every way admirable life

could be led by a woman, with no aid from passion, with no thought of marriage. And with this opinion for every day practice, the portrait given in her works of one leading such a life is Miss Ainlie, and the place accorded to passion in the dispensation of happiness such as was seen.

END OF FIRST SERIES.

# ESSAYS

IN

## BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM;

BY

PETER BAYNE, M. A.

AUTHOR OF "THE CHRISTIAN LIFE, SOCIAL AND INDIVIDUAL," ETC.

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TWO VOLUMES IN ONE.

VOL. II.

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NEW YORK:  
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1881.

C O P Y R I G H T.

H E N R Y A S U M N E R & C O M P A N Y,

1880.

## NOTICE OF THE AUTHOR.

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EARLY in 1855, the publishers of this volume had their attention directed to a critique in the Edinburgh Witness, by Hugh Miller, upon a work entitled, "The Christian Life, Social and Individual." The book had issued from a Scottish provincial press; its somewhat commonplace title gave no promise of originality; and its author was quite unknown to fame. It was not strange, therefore, that the Editor of the Witness suffered it to lie for some time unnoticed on his table. When at length he found leisure to take it in hand, he hastened to make an apology for his neglect, and to do ample justice to its author. "The master idea," he said, "on which it has been formed is, we deem, wholly original, and we regard the execution of it as not less happy than the conception is good." "Some of the Biographies," he added, "condense in comparatively brief space the thinking of ordinary volumes." Such praise from such a source was a powerful persuasive for the re-publication of the book in this country. An edition was speedily issued, and its reception by the American public was such as is seldom accorded to the first work of an unknown author. The judgment of Hugh Miller was abundantly affirmed by men of renown among ourselves.

Soon after, the present publishers learned that the author of "The Christian Life" had been a frequent, though anonymous, contributor to the periodical literature of his native country. A correspondence with him was thereupon opened, which resulted in a contract on his part to furnish

them with a selection of his published essays, together with others yet in manuscript. On their part, they made him such remuneration as was deemed by him to be amply satisfactory. The first series of the Essays thus furnished has already been given to the public. The second is presented in this volume.

The selected essays in both volumes were published, with one or two exceptions, in the author's twenty-third and twenty-fourth years. Of these essays, in their present shape, he remarks: "Some have undergone only a slight revision; others have been so modified as to be materially changed in character; while several, though, save in a single instance, retaining their original titles, may be considered altogether new." Among the contents of this volume, the papers which now for the first time appear in print, are those on Napoleon Bonaparte, Characteristics of Christian Civilization, and The Modern University. The rest have been carefully retouched, and several have received material additions. The whole constitute a body of biographical and critical composition worthy of the author of "*The Christian Life*."

It would be out of place to offer any criticism here on the contents of this volume; but it may gratify the reader to learn what estimate Sir Archibald Alison put upon the Essay devoted to his own writings. That distinguished Historian, after complimenting the Essay in question as "able and eloquent," proceeds to say that "it contains a more just and correct view of my [his] political opinions than has ever yet appeared in this country or elsewhere."

Some account of Mr. Bayne's personal history may be given here in answer to inquiries, by letter and otherwise, which have from time to time been made. It must be premised, however, that there is little to be told. Mr. Bayne is still a young man,—a young man devoted to literary pursuits,—and so, comparatively, without a history. His native country is Scotland. He was born in Aberdeenshire, and was graduated at Marischall College, in the city of Aberdeen. He subsequently pursued a course of theological study in Edinburgh, and also a philosophical course under

Sir William Hamilton. That great teacher and Thomas Carlyle appear to have been the two thinkers, who, more than all others, gave shape and direction to Mr. Bayne's mind. From the former he received his philosophy; from the latter, his literary culture. Of Carlyle's relation to him he makes this remark: "The influence exerted by him upon my style and modes of thought is as powerful as my mind was capable of receiving; yet," he adds, "my dissent from his opinions is thorough and total." While at Edinburgh, he wrote for Hogg's *Instructor* the series of articles from which several of those in this volume have been selected. The occasion of this step, he says, was "an inaptitude and distaste for private tuition, and a facility and pleasure, experienced from an early age, in literary composition." It was this "facility and pleasure," doubtless, coupled with rare success, that ultimately led him to devote himself to literature as a profession. The first fruit of this settled purpose was "*The Christian Life*." It furnished abundant evidence that he had not mistaken his vocation, that his genius was equal to his ambition. The work was published in his twenty-sixth year. He now projected more elaborate enterprises. In a private note he avows "a deliberate and ardent desire to execute four works of some magnitude, three of them, probably, of single volumes, and one of three volumes." The first of these works had already made good progress, when it was interrupted by a change in Mr. Bayne's circumstances, but was not, it is to be hoped, finally abandoned.

In 1855, we find him occupying the position of editor-in-chief of *The Commonwealth*, a newspaper published in Glasgow. From this position he retired in the summer of 1856 to recruit his failing health. In the autumn of the same year, he formed a determination to take up his residence, for a time, in Germany, for the purpose of making himself familiar with the literature of that country. He did not, however, carry his purpose into effect until the opening of the year, when he left Scotland for Berlin. On the eve of his departure, the death of Hugh Miller had made vacant the editorial chair of the *Edinburgh Witness*. Not long after

Mr. Bayne's arrival in Berlin, he was appointed to fill the vacancy thus created. The Witness, a politico-religious journal, was the organ of the Free Church, and under the conduct of Hugh Miller it had become a power in Scotland. That Mr. Bayne was thought worthy to succeed such a man, and to assume such responsibilities, was a compliment of the highest character. The appointment was accepted, to take effect at a future day; and meantime he continued his German studies. Before these were completed, a more tender engagement was formed by his betrothal to the daughter of Major General Gerwien, of the Prussian army.

In the summer of 1857, he returned from the continent, and on the first of August entered upon his duties as editor of the Witness. The columns of that journal have since borne constant testimony to the fertility of his resources. Among other elaborate papers, there has appeared a series in Defence of Hugh Miller's "Testimony of the Rocks," against an attack in the North British Review. These papers have excited so much attention that a pamphlet edition of them has been called for and issued. In this way, the intellectual wealth that should be concentrated into books for the pleasure and profit of all, is poured out through channels designed to reach the Scottish public alone. It cannot be, however, that journalism, worthy and noble though it be, will be allowed to divert Mr. Bayne, for a long period, from what he has demonstrated to be the true mission of his life; and the expression of an earnest desire to that effect, in behalf of his numerous admirers in America, may fitly close this notice.

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# ESSAYS

IN

## BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM.

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### I.

CHARLES KINGSLEY.

THERE are cases in which, by reason of certain postulates which he finds himself entitled to assume, the task of the critic is simplified and facilitated in an important degree. These postulates enable him to strike the keynote, to determine the ground-tone of his criticism. Towards all that can be characterized as fault, he must be severe; towards what is merely error, he may be mild, however decided. If he perceives that the author or book on which he comments is radically ignoble, radically promotive of laxity in principle or licentiousness in practice, however marked exceptions may be, and however dexterously the mask may be worn, it is his duty, with stern hand, to tear aside the angel's veil, and show the features of the demon. If he perceives that the heart of the book or author is sound, that, whatever errors may mingle with the words spoken, their general sense is unequivocally and firmly in favor of the good, the true, the beautiful, he must

remember that the value of such a voice is too great to permit the use of any harshness, that every objection or hint must be tempered by deference and toned by love. We feel ourselves at present in the happy alternative. However widely opinions may differ regarding Mr. Kingsley, there is one point upon which all are agreed: that his voice is that of a noble, earnest, generous-hearted man; that his whole nature vibrates with strong and perpetual sympathy with his fellow-men; and that the gifts which his heart prompts him to turn to the service of his country and his race are of no common order. With such men we may differ, but such men we cannot condemn. The spirit of their whole writings is a pledge that words of honest suggestion, of manly disagreement, will be cordially accepted and soberly weighed. Nay, in criticism we may pay them what is perhaps the highest compliment which can be paid to one of high literary eminence, that he would gladly see his fame and his writings go up in one holocaust and vanish, if a grain of precious truth, hitherto unseen, remained for his fellow-men upon the altar. Mr. Kingsley, we feel assured, will put but one question to any man who dissents from his conclusions—"Are you honest, and do you love the people?" If he can believe an affirmative answer, he will at once invite him to express his dissent to one who cannot be offended. We dissent from many of Mr. Kingsley's views, much as we value his writings; but we acknowledge that the light in him points to heaven, and that our only difference is as to the mode in which its illumination can be shed around on earth.

It is but to extend the application of these remarks from Mr. Kingsley to his writings, to say, that there is much in each and all of them which merits instant recognition and applause. A spirit of brotherly kindness breathes over

them all, of generous, hopeful ardor, of integrity, nobleness, purity ; and, we have no hesitation in adding, of sincere reverence towards God, as well as love towards man. The general influence of these books is good. If the intellectual food they afford be slight or questionable, the food for the heart is wholesome and abundant. There are books which cultivate the intellect, while they chill the heart; books which one might imagine produced by a logical machine, instead of a living man; books which seem all fuel, and no fire. Such books are invaluable if rightly used, but, on the whole, the want of heart in a book is dangerous. In Mr. Kingsley's volumes the emotions play, we suspect, rather too important a part; yet their prevalence, attuned, as they always are, to nobleness and valor, spreads a general healthfulness around. To read his works, is like travelling in a pleasant hilly country, where the fresh hearty breeze brings you the strength of the mountains, and the clear atmosphere shows you every line, and curve, and streamer, of the clouds that race the wind. You may be compelled to remark that the corn-fields are not so heavy as in the rich plain, that perhaps the poppy and the corn-flower, beautiful to the eye, but light on the granary-floor, are somewhat too abundant, and that there is an ample allowance of gay copse, and heath, and fern. But you feel that, at least, there is no miasma, that there is no haze, such as floats suspiciously over the rich, moist meadow, that you are in a land of freshness, freedom, health.

We cannot, however, disguise the fact, that we have hitherto stated what is short of the whole truth. There is one other remark to be made concerning all such books as Mr. Kingsley's, which will more than justify us in applying a searching criticism to his works. Nature has not the slightest respect for men's intentions : with her, bulk and

ornament go for nothing. If you have spent half your lifetime in attempting to bridge a chasm, and have, in any way, misplaced the key-stone, your arch will just fall when the scaffolding is removed. Deck your barge in the beauties of Cleopatra's, let its sides glitter with gold, and its sails gleam like the iris, if some unseen worm has bitten through its timbers, it will sink just as fast as so many tarred boards rudely nailed together. To get over the ford, how many water-lilies, fairly disspread, and basking in the radiance of their beauty, against just so many stepping-stones, bare and rugged, as will enable you, though with difficulty, to get across?

This is certainly very plain, and may appear trite or irrelevant; we believe that, in the present day, its importance is incalculable. In a time when thousands write, when a brilliant, ornate, emphatic style is extremely fashionable, and when youthful ardor and impetuosity are so commonly combined with peremptory dogmatism, it is of real moment that men constantly remember, that it is the bare fact, the simple truth, which can be of real avail. Language has such powers of disguising error, that it were no very absurd philosophic paradox to assert, that every false opinion has arisen from its misuse. And it is a nobly human task to perform the operation, which nature ultimately performs, upon every proposition presented for consideration; to rub off every hue, to draw aside every veil, to remove every flower, and gaze on the naked fact; to disrobe the glowing, the charming figure, till it is as bare as a diagram of Euclid's. It is precisely the diagram which nature will own. We would earnestly recommend readers to apply this test to certain of our exuberant and metaphoric modern writers. Let them take a paragraph which has dazzled them by its sparkling imagery, and borne them

away in the stream of its fervor; let them test the application of each simile; let them for the time close their ears to each appeal; let them hush every murmur of passion; and then let them apply to the simple argument of the passage the dry light of careful, unagitated thought. Well is it, when the book itself honestly invites this scrutiny; well is it, when the moral earnestness of the writer awakes in the reader such a conscientious desire for truth, that he feels himself urged to apply such criticism. We honor Mr. Kingsley, in believing, as we said, that he would have us treat his books in this way.

Mr. Kingsley is one of those men whom we could with most decision fix upon as representative of his age. By this we mean no assertion of extraordinary intellectual powers; we even intend to exclude the idea of his being a leader among his fellows; our assertion is, that sympathy is his determining characteristic, that the influences of the time are largely represented in his mode of thought and composition. His is precisely that order of mind of which it can be asserted, that its whole character and actings would have been changed, if it had arrived ten years earlier or ten years later in the world. He is one of those men who seem to be intended to serve as beacons, blazing fiercely *after* they have been once kindled, and showing, by the direction of the flame, how the wind of tendency is blowing. All men are moulded and moved by sympathy; a man cannot live by himself; he is bound to his race as no other being on earth is bound. But he also reacts upon his generation, upon circumstance, by force of individual character. These two facts are decisive in determining a man's rank in the scale of greatness, when by greatness we mean power. The dull man obeys, mechanically, the ruling ideas of his time, following his neighbors and feeling

little in any way; the impulsive, the sympathetic, the superiorly gifted, are moved by that new force in the agencies of the time which voices itself most powerfully; the master minds feel the influences of their age, but see through them and over them, in free, independent strength, and utter words, or perform deeds, which will direct or influence, not their own generation only, but we know not how many succeeding generations. It were an extremely profitable mental exercise to solve, concerning any great man, the problem—What would he have been if placed in a different age? Had Plato and Calvin changed centuries, to what extent would their minds have been affected, and their work modified? We can confidently say, that though each would have been materially altered, yet each would have towered over his contemporaries, listening certainly to all they said, but speaking ever a louder, a more decisive word, of instruction, of guidance, of command. Of the second class of minds, in the descending order, the receptive, the emotional, the distinctively sympathetic, it is characteristic that their grasp of truth, in itself, is not so strong as to rid them sufficiently of influence from the fact, that other men have spoken for it or against it. They love truth sincerely and earnestly, but their power does not second their will; the emotional part of their nature so far intoxicates the intellectual, that what comes fairly attired in eloquence, pleading fearlessly, and sincerely, and well, is at once received as truth. If we were asked to eliminate the radical, unconscious, determining element in such minds, we would assert it to consist in this: that the instinctive axiom on which they proceed, is rather, that the voice of man cannot be wrong, than that the voice of God alone, simple truth unsupported by one vote under the sun, is eternally right. “He,” says Coleridge, “who

asserts that truth is of no importance, except in the signification of sincerity, confounds sense with madness, and the word of God with a dream." Yet, so mighty in its influence over man is man's voice, although all would assent to the theoretic proposition, its practical application is of extreme difficulty. Rigorously apply the test of thought to the system of Shelley, and its value is nearly impalpable; yield to the influence of his marvellous powers of expression, consent like a babe in its cradle to listen to his song, until it lulls you into soft dreams, and bears you away to its own gorgeous cloudland, and how completely you are mastered! Some clever fellow might give us a *jeu d'esprit*, entitled, "The works of Shelley translated into the language of Butler;" two or three pages of a magazine would contain it. And how strange were the metamorphosis! From the entrancing smiles, and rich glowing tones, and perfect curves, and deep, passionate glance of a living goddess of love, to a slight, wind-raised fringe of atheistic foam! Mr. Carlyle is a very different man from Shelley; his knowledge of man and his pure intellectual power render any comparison between the two absurd; yet we believe his mind to be of the poetic type as distinctively as Shelley's, and we say, without hesitation, that his influence on his time—extending, as it does, mainly, if not solely, over those who have become acquainted with his writings during the period of their youthful ardor—had been nowise so mighty, if his powers of thought had been unaided by his truly poetic powers of expression.

Mr. Kingsley has been profoundly influenced by the writings of Mr. Carlyle; so profoundly, that at times he seems almost to lose his personal identity. The axioms of Mr. Carlyle's system of thought meet us, perhaps twice repeated, in each chapter, and we must allege that they are

often given in their original bareness, without being materially unfolded, or pointing the way towards further truth. Mr. Carlyle's forms of expression and of sentence are continually recurring, while we are forced to own the absence of that original and piercing observation, and that occasional rhythmic cadence, which redeem their singularity in his works.

But Mr. Kingsley is a minister of the Church of England, a believer in Christianity. This is the second explicative fact in determining his mental constitution and analyzing his works. Christianity must be true; but Mr. Carlyle cannot speak falsely: a union must be devised between the two. And so Mr. Kingsley becomes one great representative of the influence of Mr. Carlyle upon believers in Christianity in the nineteenth century. We speak not in any tone of censure. It is, indeed, much the reverse. We firmly believe that such men as Mr. Carlyle are not sent into our world for nothing—that they may speak truth which it is the duty of Christians to hear, expose errors or delinquencies which it is the duty of Christians to amend. We thank Mr. Kingsley for reminding us of an important truth, when he tells us, “That God’s grace, like his love, is free, and that His Spirit bloweth where it listeth, and vindicates its own free-will against our narrow systems, by revealing at times, even to nominal heretics and infidels, truths which the Catholic Church must humbly receive as the message of Him who is wider, deeper, more tolerant, than even she can be.” Surely it is not well with a Christian church, when those who refuse the Christian name exclaim, that they have applied to her the test appointed by her Master, that they have looked round upon her works, and have gained such a knowledge of her by so doing, that they must assail her. We cannot, indeed, on any hypoth-

esis defend those who confound Christianity with hierarchy, in their attacks on the church. When they have exhausted Christian morality, when they have raised the standard of holiness and of love higher than "Christ and his disciples" raised it, then they may speak against the Gospel of Jesus but the church must look warily and ponder well, when infidels assert that their standard is higher than hers, that the ancient, all-conquering banner is draggled in the mire. Mr. Kingsley is right in accepting Mr. Carlyle's writings as a stern and momentous warning to Christian churches to awake and bestir themselves.

From the influence of Mr. Carlyle, and all that he represents of modern doubt, modern inquiry, modern philosophy, come those two applications of Christianity to distinct phenomena of our time, which Mr. Kingsley has embodied in *Alton Locke* and *Hypatia*. In the former, he endeavors to apply Christianity to the arrangements of our social system; in the latter, his chief effort is to show that Christianity alone allays and satisfies the cravings of the earnest philosophic skeptic. It is unnecessary to dwell upon *Yeast*, since it is an exhibition rather than a removal of difficulties, a 'problem' without its solution. We doubt not Mr. Kingsley would permit us to say, that the answers to the questions proposed in *Yeast* are to be found in the two works we have just referred to; not, perhaps, the complete and final answers, but, at least, the general outline of those methods by which national and individual health, moral, social, intellectual, are to be attained. To these two works, then, we propose first to direct our attention, after quoting two short passages from *Yeast*, the first declarative of Mr. Kingsley's faith in the final victory of Christianity, the second very appropriately and cheerfully conclusive on the point that, however dark may be the revelations of

*Alton Locke*, we have reason even in our century, to thank God and take courage.

"I believe that the ancient creed, the eternal gospel, will stand, and conquer, and prove its might in this age, as it has in every other for eighteen hundred years, by claiming, subduing, and organizing those young anarchic forces, which now, unconscious of their parentage, rebel against Him to whom they owe their being."

This is a good hope, and the man may act courageously in whose bosom it dwells. Yet we must remark, that such general declarations, except when based on a very wide and accurate induction, are of little value. If the period at which Christianity is to triumph is at an indefinite distance, the announcement is little better than a truism; a noble, a glorious truism, indeed; but of application to all times as well as the present. If Mr. Kingsley intends to declare that Christianity has hitherto prevailed over every form of infidelity, in such a manner and within such a time as to dispel all fear for its victory over skepticism in our century, we must demur to his correctness. It is as stern a duty to compute the force and to weigh the triumphs of the adversary, as it is to bare the sword, and march into the conflict. Whatever the shame and agony with which we accompany the concession, we must grant that the doctrines of Voltaire have been extensively victorious on the Continent. The fact is one of unspeakable sadness; but, like every fact honestly accepted and interpreted, it reads us important lessons. It points us to the Continent, where thrones totter, where armies march, where, for sixty years, human blood has been flowing in torrents from battle-plain and barricade; in these fearful characters it holds up to us the truth, that religion is the sheet-anchor of national stability, that the nations which know not God

must perish. It tells us also that it is a dangerous thing to dally with error, to lay the beautifully-tinted, slumbering snake in the bosom. How little did many a philosophic abbé dream whither all that encyclopædism was leading! The ultimate tendency of principles is hard to define. Men may plant gardens on the sides of a volcano, and rejoice as the heat beneath insensibly increases, warming the roots of their flowers, and causing them to put forth fresh buds; until suddenly all are flung into the air. The doctrines of Carlyle and Emerson may lend a fresh vigor to Christianity; but let them who use them for that purpose, at the least, beware.

Now for our second preliminary extract:—

“How dare you, young man, despair of your own nation, while its nobles can produce a Carlyle, an Ellesmere, an Ashley, a Robert Grosvenor; while its middle classes can beget a Faraday, a Stevenson, a Brooke, an Elizabeth Fry? See, I say, what a chaos of noble materials is here—all confused, it is true—polarized, jarring, and chaotic—here bigotry, there self-will, superstition, sheer atheism often, but only waiting for the one inspiring Spirit, to organize, and unite, and consecrate this chaos into the noblest polity the world ever saw realized!”

A deliberate consideration of the great and hopeful fact expressed in this passage, the fact that, at this moment, in this island, there are, perhaps, as many noble intellects at work, and as many noble hearts beating, as were ever collected in the same space since the world began, might, we think, have spread a general air of moderation, and forbearance, and deference, over Mr. Kingsley’s works, for which we look in vain.

Such occasional passages as the above do little more than excite our astonishment at the dogmatism of Mr. Kings-

ley's general opinions, and the asperity of his general appeals. "It might seem incredible," said the cool and large-minded Mackintosh, "if it were not established by the experience of all ages, that those who differ most from the opinions of their fellow-men are most confident of the truth of their own." It is a kindred observation, and equally true, that those whose opinions are hastily adopted, those who refuse the long drudgery of thought, and think with the heart rather than the head, are ever the most fiercely dogmatic in their tone. Mr. Kingsley deals round his blows at political economists, at evangelical clergymen, at Calvinists, and others, with such fierce decision, that we might reasonably expect to find him prepared with some all-healing scheme, before which every other philanthropic or political device would hide its diminished head, or, at least, with some carefully-thought refutation of opposing theories. But, instead of this, we find the remedy he proposes to apply to our social ills to be one concerning which the most ardent friend of the people may entertain serious doubts; the answer he affords to our philosophic questionings, however true, to be neither very novel, very precise, nor very profound; and his refutation of opposing theories to be little else than strong appeals to our feelings, with certain disputable axioms from Mr. Carlyle. We are happy, however, to be able to state, that Mr. Kingsley's ablest work, *Hypatia*, is marked by a great improvement in this respect. If a certain patronizing, pitying, condescending tone towards an old rheumatic church, and a slow, un-ideal generation, still lingers on the page, we gladly admit that it is nowise so conspicuous as elsewhere, and that the dogmatism has as good as disappeared.

*Alton Locke* is a didactic novel, suggested by the sorrows of the tailors and needlewomen of the metropolis,

Its objects are, to open the eyes of the public to the horrors endured by large numbers of our working-classes, and to advocate a scheme by which these horrors can be removed.

The hero, Alton Locke, is a talented youth, born in extreme poverty; who becomes a tailor, a skeptic, a Chartist, an author, and ultimately an advocate of Christian socialism. The book opens with a sketch of his early life. He was quite a remarkable child. Not only was his moral nature superhumanly faultless, but his love of nature was so intense, that he found his delight in zoölogizing among the beetles and worms, which children in general shun.

His mother was also, in her way, remarkable. She was a Calvinist, who carried Calvinism further than we ever saw it carried; to an extent, indeed, which we consider impossible. She is represented as exceeding logical. "She dared not even pray for our conversion, earnestly as she prayed on every other subject. . . . Had it not been decided from all eternity?" Yet "her clear logical sense" failed to perceive that just as God knew from all eternity who would be his redeemed in time, so He knew every other matter; that this was not his single act of omniscience and omnipotence. Calvinism sets its foot upon the fact of God's foreknowledge, implying, as it does, certainty; an honest opponent of Calvinism must allow that it enjoins the use of all possible means. We cannot but think Mr. Kingsley has here drawn a supposititious character, has rather looked at what he conceived to be Calvinism, and embodied what he believed to be its inevitable results, than drawn from actual life. There never was a more decided Calvinist than Jonathan Edwards; we recommend his works to Mr. Kingsley as an answer to the question whether Calvinism destroys active endeavor after conversion or all-embracing and earnest prayer. If Mrs. Locke

was too logical to pray for the conversion of her children, it was by a breach of logic that she prayed for anything in the world.

His mother's Calvinism develops precocious skepticism in young Alton, so that, when he comes in contact with clever infidelity, among the journeymen tailors with whom he goes to work, he speedily loses his early belief in the Bible as the Word of God. He becomes acquainted with an old Scotchman, named Sandy Mackaye, shrewd, speculative, warm-hearted, and an intense admirer of Mr. Carlyle. The influence of Sandy, and of John Crossthwaite, an intelligent Chartist tailor, prevails so far with Alton, as to make him an ardent Chartist. He gives early indications of high literary ability, and soon commences to rhyme. In a picture-gallery he falls vehemently in love with the daughter of a dean, in his affection for whom he is thwarted by a malicious and selfish cousin. He is on the Chartist side on the famous 10th of April, but takes no part in the proceedings. At length he expires, just as he comes within sight of the American coast, whither he had set out, in conformity with the last will and testament of Sandy Mackaye. Besides Alton Locke and Sandy, there are several other characters of importance; a philanthropic, scientific dean, who is so devoid of aristocratic exclusiveness as to invite a journeyman tailor to reside for some time in his house, on a footing of perfect equality, merely because he has displayed uncommon talents; a variety of distressed tailors; and a Lady Eleanor Staunton, who marries a cultivated and benevolent nobleman, becomes a widow, expends her fortune in works of charity, is ahead of her whole age in Christian philanthropy and philosophy, converts Alton and Crossthwaite, and in every way approves herself what the heroine of a philanthropic novel ought to be.

We shall not enlarge upon the fact that probability is unceremoniously violated in *Alton Locke*. That such is the case, is undeniable, and has been elsewhere very forcibly pointed out. This, indeed, is no unusual circumstance in the novels of Mr. Kingsley. His characters very often move in an atmosphere of their own — exhibit qualities and experience emotions peculiar to themselves. That ride of Lancelot's after the fox, in the commencement of *Yeast*, is a remarkable illustration of the fact. If Mr. Kingsley himself performed that notable ride, we will take his assertion as indisputable; but we must be permitted to doubt whether any other man ever rode after a fox in the like fashion. With the prize in view, and coming down hill, Lancelot checks his horse to sentimentalize on the affecting circumstance that the hounds have leaped over the paling of a churchyard; he sees a lady emerge from the church, who quite changes the current of his ideas; he dashes on again after the fox; but, as the saddle, during a steeple-chase, is a peculiarly fitting place, from its repose and safety, for philosophic dreaming, he thinks nothing of his horse, but only of the ladye-love he has just seen; "his understanding was trying to ride, while his spirit was left behind with Argemone." He comes back to himself precisely at the moment when he ought to have stayed away, just as his horse is clearing a high paling; his first act of returning consciousness is to check the steed in mid-air, and of course bring him down on the palings. Really, the probability would have been rather enhanced than otherwise, by our being informed that the whole apparatus, horse and man, was constructed of timber, and went by steam. In violence of emotion, again, and sudden change of scene, we might back Mr. Kingsley's novels against any production of the Minerva Press. The period

and scene in which the plot of *Hypatia* is laid, were so confused and tumultuous, that there is an apology at hand for considerable commotion and excitement. But, even with this concession, we must submit that the whole book wears too much the aspect of a frenzied dream, and that no mere mortal could possibly weep so much, swoon so much, be enraptured so much, as that sorely-tried youth Philammon, within a few days, and yet survive. Mr. Kingsley's figures seem beyond the influence of those sedatives which nature has kindly appointed for the excited brain. "Day and night successive, and the timely dew of sleep," of which Adam spoke to Eve, seem not to affect them. Nay, the usual tranquillizing effects of mere eating and drinking, the mere clogging of the ethereal principle by the body to which it is chained, appear to be escaped by them. All their emotions are in the superlative degree; if extremes are always false, we tremble for Mr. Kingsley's reputation as a depicter of character. We have our own objections to bring against Mr. Thackeray, but here he deserves all praise; his characters, however devoid they may be of any important power to instruct or animate, are just the poor, dull human beings, or the supposably clever people, one meets in actual life. Mr. Kingsley's figures appear to move about in an atmosphere of fire-mist.

In his hero, Alton Locke, Mr. Kingsley has, perhaps unconsciously, drawn a character which is very common in the present day. His radical quality, little as he or Mr. Kingsley thinks so, is intellectual weakness. He staggers on from opinion to opinion, taking his ideas always from the more powerful minds with which he comes in contact; when he dies, we are by no means sure that, had he lived seven years, he would not have returned from America with his opinions entirely altered once more. We have

long admired and wondered at the power of Shakspeare in portraying such men as Alton Locke. He has a large class of characters, whose distinguishing quality it is, that persuasion has absolute power over them. Such are Coriolanus, Othello, Cassius the friend of Othello; our readers may recollect many others. They are noble fellows all; full of fire, of generosity, of intensity; their words are metaphorical and far-sounding; but, somehow or other, the reason is always led captive; the will stoops to receive the yoke; despite asseveration, despite determination, the point at which they will yield to entreaty can be calculated and assigned. Of this radical type is Alton Locke; with sufficient eloquence of voice and smile, Lillian could have turned him to anything; his actions are impulsive and headstrong, his feelings occupy the throne in his mind. We agree most cordially with the grand truth, whose promulgation brings this book to a conclusion; the grand truth that Christianity alone can save the working-man: but certainly, the fact that a beautiful benefactress converts Alton to this faith, as the last of a variety of opinions, would weigh very little with us in its adoption.

Sandy Mackaye is certainly a very ably-drawn and instructive character. He has been recognized as the best figure in the book, and we care not to combat the opinion; yet we think that Alton Locke is, in his way, just as true to nature. Sandy is a fierce realist, who reads old history and polities, and the works of Mr. Carlyle; who cannot away with any high-flown mysticism, or wanderings in the regions of the ideal; who loves the people with a profound and unquenchable love; whose talk may at times be crabbed, but whose heart is always warm; and who rests immovably in the fact, that moral excellence is the only hope for the poor man. It were absurd to deny that Mr. Kings-

ley has displayed extraordinary powers in depicting Sandy Mackaye. Yet, even here, we have one word of objection, and again its application extends beyond the present instance. Mr. Kingsley exhibits on various occasions an intimate acquaintance with Mr. Carlyle's and Goethe's great doctrine of unconsciousness; he must also from the great "Harpocrates-Stentor" have heard a great deal about silence. How is it, then, that his characters are so extremely conscious, and so extremely talkative? There is no law of which we can more confidently affirm the universality — witness nature and Shakspeare — than the law that those who act greatly and feel deeply do not talk much. Great men are marked by their power to dispense with human sympathy: "silence is the perfectest herald of joy;" and who does not know that the proud heart, in its moments of deepest anguish, scorns to vent its sorrow in words? Mr. Carlyle rightly rejects the story that Burns was seen by some tourists in a theatrical garb and attitude, knowing that his manly mind would have shaken away such frivolous distinction. Cromwell was no man to make collections of bits of armor from his various fields, or of flags from the various castles he reduced. Does Shakspeare make mighty Julius talk much? We cannot believe that Sandy Mackaye's room was decorated as Mr. Kingsley avers. Political caricatures dangling from the roof; obnoxious books impaled; Icon Basilike "dressed up in a paper shirt, all drawn over with figures of flames and devils, and surmounted by a peaked paper cap, like an *auto-da-fe*;" — all this is too trivial, too external, for the man who will risk his life for freedom. Go into the room of the juvenile amateur Chartist, whose valor all evaporates at the sight of a baton, and you will probably find the whole. Mr. Kingsley's characters are always opening up to you their

whole hearts; every emotion must reach the tongue; Eleanor alone, of all his figures that we at present recollect, exhibits a slight trace of most refreshing taciturnity. One is reminded, in listening to their incessant parade of emotion, of those regarding whom Guizot, quoting from Petrarch, says, that their "tongue was at once their lance and sword, their casque and buckler." We really mean to give Mr. Kingsley a friendly hint, when we remind him of that masterly stroke in Sallust's portraiture of Jugurtha, "plurimum facere, minimum de se loqui."

We cannot dwell upon particular scenes in *Alton Locke*, but we must express our unqualified admiration of that chapter in which Sandy Mackaye, after listening to Alton's poetry about the island in the Pacific, suddenly drags him away to visit certain scenes which he knows in London, and which, by Sandy's irresistible recommendation, become thenceforth the sole subjects of Alton's muse. The boy's rhymes about his adopted island, which was to be colonized and converted by missionaries, are remarkably good; one is tempted to imagine them real productions; the lowest praise that can be given them is, that they are facsimiles. The fragments of the description of the isle, with its central volcano, which,

"Shaking a sinful isle with thundering shocks,  
Reproved the worshippers of stones and stocks,"

admit of no improvement. Sandy laughs heartily at this rhyme, but, relapsing into a very serious mood, leads the youth swiftly away to give him a glimpse of the poetry of reality. He brings him first to an alley, where, on the one hand, a gin-palace, and on the other, a pawnbroker's shop, feed, like two hell-born monsters, on the poor. The scene is depicted with harrowing distinctness:—

"But all this," whines Alton, "is so—so unpoetical."

"Hech!" exclaims Sandy, "is there no' heaven above them there, and the hell beneath them? and God frown-ing, and the devil grinning! No poetry there! Is no' the verra idea o' the classic tragedy defined to be, man con-quered by circumstance? Canna ye see it there? And the verra idea of the modern tragedy, man conquering cir-cumstance? And I 'll show ye that, too, in many a garret where no eye but the gude God's enters, to see the patience, and the fortitude, and the self-sacrifice, and the luve stronger than death, that 's shining in thae dark places o' the earth. Come wi' me, and see."

Sandy then guides Alton to a miserable garret, where a wretched family drag out a wo-stricken existence in utter want. Yet the pride of other days lingers there, and the work-house is recoiled from. One girl lies dying on a cold bed, yet enjoying the purest joys of religious rapture. An-other is driven, to avert the absolute starvation of her mother and the rest, to that resource which is worse than death, which is suggestive of the most profoundly melan-choly reflections to which even our dark world can give rise. No part of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* seems to us to reach the pathos which has been reached by Mr. Kingsley in this passage. The mother prefers absolute starvation to shame, and appeals to Sandy to expostulate with her daughter as to her conduct. The latter, in such tones as may be imagined, breaks in thus:—"Repent—I have repented—I repent of it every hour—I hate myself, and hate all the world, because of it; but I must—I must. I cannot see her starve, and I cannot starve myself." And then what inexpressible pathos is here!—"Oh! if that fine lady as we're making that riding-habit for, would just spare only half the money that goes in dressing her up to ride

in the park, to send us out to the colonies, would n't I be an honest girl there! — Maybe, an honest man's wife! Oh, my God! would n't I slave my fingers to the bone for him!"

Sandy, on their departure, thus sums up all to the young poet: — " Poetic element? Yon lassie, rejoicing in her disfigurement, like the nuns of Peterborough in auld time — is there no poetry there? That puir lassie, dying on the bare boards, and seeing her Saviour in her dreams, is there no poetry there, callant? That ould body owre the fire, wi' her "an officer's dochter," is there no poetry there? — tragedy

' With hues as when some mighty painter dips  
His pen in dyes of earthquake and eclipse.'

Ay, Shelly's gran'; always gran'; but fact is grander — God and Satan are grander. All around ye, in every gin-shop and costermonger's cellar, are God and Satan at death-gripes; every garret is a haill 'Paradise Lost' or 'Paradise Regained,' and will ye think it beneath ye to be the people's poet?"

That whole chapter is masterly.

We think also that the description of Sandy's death is a singularly felicitous effort of genius. The old man had doubted and speculated long, clear only of one thing, that it was his duty to love his neighbor as himself, and give his every faculty to resist the empire of darkness here on earth. The times were perplexing, ominous, dreary; he could not fathom or explain God's dealings with men; but he stood firm in his integrity; and closed his lips with these words, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right — right — right —" Higher than this "ground plan of the universe," than this simple faith in infinite Wisdom and infinite Love, no finite intellect has gone.

Mr. Kingsley has an immovable conviction that the evils of society can be cured by bringing Christianity to bear upon them. It was the idea of the life of Chalmers. We need not say that our hope, too, lies here. Mr. Kingsley, in *Alton Locke*, and in all his books, invokes Christians to commence the aggressive Christianization of the masses of our population. He cuts mercilessly into what is now becoming generally known by Mr. Carlyle's nickname, "respectability." The Christianity of custom, the comfortable religion that is anxious, for safety's sake, to show a good example, all Christianity that does not recognise the equalizing energy of the gospel of Jesus, stripping men to the bare souls, and showing them all brethren if they are in Christ Jesus, he lays bare with ruthless hands, and bids away. Disguise it as we will, the fact pointed at in the following paragraph is as undeniable as it is portentous:—

"Is not," asks one, "the Church of England the very purest form of apostolic Christianity?"

"It may be," is the answer, "and so may the other sects. But, somehow, in Judea, it was the publicans and harlots who pressed into the kingdom of heaven; it was the common people who heard Christ gladly. Christianity, then, was a movement in the hearts of the lower order. But now, my dear fellow, you rich, who used to be told, in St. James's time, to weep and howl, have turned the tables upon us poor. It is *you* who are talking all along of converting *us*. Look at any place of worship you like, orthodox and heretical; who fill the pews? the pharisees and the covetous, who used to deride Christ, fill his churches, and say still, 'This people, these masses, who know not the gospel, are accursed?' And the universal feeling, as far as I can judge, seems to be, not, 'how hardly shall

'they who have,' but hardly shall they who have *not*, 'riches enter into the kingdom of heaven.'"

This is put into the mouth of a working-man, or one who has but partially emerged from the ranks of those who work with their hands. We shall hope there is somewhat of exaggeration in the words, particularly in application to one part of the island. Yet, granting that the representation is in the main correct, we are forced to remark, that the fault lies as much with working-men themselves, as with any other class. Can any class expunge from the Bible those declarations which make it emphatically the book of the poor? or hide the fact, that Christ and his apostles were poor? Why, then, must Christianity ever be confounded with the short-comings of Christians, the Church in which all are kings and priests, with a priesthood? Let working-men ponder this other passage:—

"Take all the heroes, prophets, poets, philosophers, where will you find the true demagogue, the speaker to man simply as man, the friend of publicans and sinners, the stern foe of the scribe and the pharisee, with whom was no respect of persons? Socrates and Plato were noble; Zerdusht and Confutzee, for all we know, were nobler still; but what were they but the exclusive mystagogues of an enlightened few, like our own Emersons and Straussess, to compare great things with small? What gospel have they, or Strauss or Emerson, for the poor, the suffering, the oppressed? The people's friend; where will you find him but in Jesus of Nazareth?"

It is to Christianity, then, that Mr. Kingsley looks for the regeneration of society. So far he has our cordial assent. When we come to examine his scheme for its application to our social disorders, we must confess more or hesitation. He proposes a universal union among the

various sections of the working-classes, for co-operation in production and division of profits. There is nothing, at least, wild or visionary in the project. There are many associations of workmen in France, and in several instances they have been found successful. It is easy to form the idea of each trade as a vast joint-stock company, in which the workmen are both owners and laborers. Mr. Kingsley proposes no arbitrary levelling of ranks; he perceives that, in countless cases, individual cupidity and individual helplessness produce, on the one hand, exorbitant wealth, on the other, destitution and slavery; he would substitute the economy of working owners for the cupidity of one, the superintendence of indispensable functionaries for the fortuitous extortion of middle-men. In this there is really nothing absurd or chimerical. The era of the equal enjoyment of comfort by each class of the community is still beyond ken in the remoteness of the future; but the period when an attempt may be made towards the approximation of classes has, we hope, arrived; and we see no danger in adopting, as the basis of this attempt, the principle of co-operation among the laboring class.

But when we lend this cautious sanction to the essential principle of Mr. Kingsley's schemes, he must bear with us while we give him two brief but emphatic counsels, attention to which is necessary to even a possibility of success. First, we must assure him that the difficulties which stand in the way of a practical realization of his plan are of the gravest description. For an exposition of these difficulties, we refer our readers to Mr. Greg's very able essays on the subject. We cannot consider the reasonings of that talented writer absolutely conclusive; but we can say, that they render the tone in which Mr. Kingsley advocates his scheme utterly indefensible. Only in calm and deliberate

moods can such questions be treated; not when the blood is on fire with excitement, and the eye blind with burning tears; in the anxious recollection of what Goethe says about the danger of "active ignorance," and in the conviction that the problem to be solved in theory and practice might demand the abstraction of a Newton and the sagacity of a Napoleon, must such proposals be entertained. We must hear no more about "the fiend of competition." The sympathies of all save those who have a selfish interest in the prolongation of present distress, are with the philanthropic reformer. The boyish mistake must not be committed, of confounding with the rancor of cupidity that which may be the anticipation of nature's decision. Our second counsel to Mr. Kingsley is of kin to our first; we advise him to speak no more in a tone of contempt of political economy. It is true, that he mentions Mr. Mill with respect, but there is no disguising the sneer with which he greets the science of which Mr. Mill is a leading exponent. We may grant he is not quite consistent here; we suppose he would have Christian pastors acquainted with the principles of social science; but he cannot rid himself of the influence of Mr. Carlyle's denunciation of political economy. Now, if there is one opinion in the circle of ideas in which every reflective man may be expected to agree, it is, that Mr. Carlyle is here absolutely wrong. It can be no defence to say, that political economists advocate such and such a scheme; this is merely attributing to Mr. Carlyle a vulgar and childish error. Political economists are not men who advocate any scheme whatever, any more than astronomers are men who advocate any particular theory of light or of gravitation: astronomers are men who devote themselves to the discovery of what the laws regulating the heavenly bodies are; political

economists are those who bend their powers to the elimination of one great class of the laws which regulate the social system. Their only postulate is one which Mr. Carlyle reiterates, “ *ubi homines sunt, modi sunt;* ” where men exist together for an hour, and act together in any particular way, there will spring up certain modes of thought and action. If there are no such modes in our economic affairs, if this is the only province in the universe where sequence is, *prima facie*, as untraceable as in the domain of the Anarch old, or if it is an evil that men, before proceeding to work, should simply and without further assumption *know* the elements with which they have to do, then can Mr. Carlyle be defended in his attacks on the economists. His tone is not that of remonstrance ; it is that of unmeasured contempt and indignation ; and the thunder and flash of his aimless artillery have deafened and dazzled Mr. Kingsley. The fact is, that the arguments which can be adduced against political economists, as such, are almost unanswerably absurd ; they remind one of Shelley’s differently-applied expression, “ invulnerable nothings ; ” they are ghosts too filmy for lead or bayonet, but which the first glimpse of daylight resolves into invisibility.

In *Alton Locke*, Mr. Kingsley weighs Christianity as a gospel of temporal salvation for the people. In *Hypatia*, he measures it as a substitute for ancient and modern philosophy. We shall not say that the execution in *Hypatia* corresponds to the grandeur of the idea or the importance of the subject ; but we accord Mr. Kingsley the high praise that he has in this work correctly read one great sign of the times. The thesis he attempts to prove in *Hypatia* may be concisely expressed thus :— Christianity brings philosophy into life, and life into philosophy : on the one hand, it brings down into the hearts of men the ideas of purity which

floated formerly in a few rare minds; on the other, it hallops all those social relations with which philosophy has in all ages shown such a willingness to meddle. We might expatiate on the power displayed in separate passages in this book. We might congratulate Mr. Kingsley on the fact, that his colors retain all their richness and brilliancy, being, indeed, rather deepened and enriched than otherwise. But, on the whole, we must pronounce *Hypatia* a failure. We have a general and grave objection to the method adopted by its author for the promulgation of his views. Even waiving the consideration of the fitness of the novel for the discussion of any controverted question — and here Mr. Greg's objections have considerable weight — we put it calmly to Mr. Kingsley, whether the momentous interests he desires to serve are best promoted by a series of fictions? It is a new thing, surely, to reconstruct society on a foundation of brilliant and fashionable novels. Really, if this example prevails, discussion will become, in the happy ages of our children, a different thing from what it has been hitherto. Its liveliness will be indescribable. Only conceive the change that will come about in the matter of citations. No longer will one groan over such references as these: — Thom. Aq. Summ. Theol. (lib. x., cap. xi., sec. xii.); Duns. Scot. de Sent. Lombard (prop. iii., sec. iv.); Grot. de Jure Belli et Pacis (vol. i., lib. ii., cap. iii.). We shall be charmed by such authorities as these: — "The Christian Religion and the Rights of man" (see exhort. at bedside of Alt. Locke, by Elean. Lyne. stand. nov., vol. xi. Kings.); "The Fundamental Distinction between Religion and Philosophy" (see speech declar. of Ed. Clifford to Angel. Goldfinch. Bent., ser., vol. xix.). There is a good time coming, boys and girls, sure enough! But joking apart, we seriously think novels are not the best vehicle

for such important proposals as Mr. Kingsley's. Surely the suffrage of the boarding-schools is not of such extreme value. Would not a few calmly-argued treatises, which men might read and ponder, be of more real weight than an indefinite number of drawing-room fictions? To this extent our objection applies to all such novels as Mr. Kingsley's. But of *Hypatia* we are compelled to say yet more. We think it is a failure on its own ground. We cannot be charged with bias in favor of philosophy against Christianity, yet we acknowledge our impression, after witnessing the part each plays in the book, to be rather in favor of the former than the latter. Surely Mr. Kingsley, in almost morbid candor, permitted an adversary to choose his facts. To assail philosophy by a picture of its loveliest and one of its purest martyrs; to advocate Christianity in a book many of whose darkest scenes are pictures of Christian atrocity, and whose catastrophe is one of the blackest crimes ever gloated over by a Gibbon:—we pause in astonishment at the anomaly! But, rejoins Mr. Kingsley, it was my object to teach a lesson to Christians also; to show them that force and fraud can never be wedded to Christianity, without a baneful progeny being the result. Such, it is true, was Mr. Kingsley's aim; but he leaves himself very much in the case of him who wrote a severe attack upon himself and neglected the intended vindication. We see the evil in full operation, there is a dramatic exhibition of that; but we discover only from a few didactic hints, that matters would have been mended by a different state of circumstances. With all its gorgeousness of coloring, and sustained intensity of interest, and general correctness of conclusion, *Hypatia* must be pronounced a failure.

In the composition of *Westward Ho*, Mr. Kingsley had a purpose less expressly didactic than that of the novels

we have mentioned. He approached his subject more entirely from the artistic point of view, desirous not so much to illustrate or enforce an argument, applicable at a particular time and to one class of circumstances, as to depict scenes fitted to evoke universal and perpetual admiration, and to delineate characters with which all generations might sympathize. To emerge thus into the wider sphere of general art must have been felt as a decided advantage by Mr. Kingsley; and an advantage corresponding to that experienced by him, might have been looked for, in a more natural and easy freedom of narrative, and in didactic inferences less strained and premeditated, by readers. This expectation would not have been altogether disappointed. *Westward Ho* is in some respects the most hearty, healthful, and true, of Mr. Kingsley's fictions. His sympathy with the old heroes whom he endeavors to portray, is genuine and profound; in the rocky coves of the coast of Devon and on the pleasant hills of its interior, his step is elastic and joyous as if he had known them in his youth; and although he never wrote without a present glow of enthusiasm in his subject, it may easily be believed that neither in the description of the Greeks of the Nile, nor in the exposure and treatment of our social maladies, was he, on the whole, so much at home, as in company of the Raleighs and Drakes, with ancient philosophy and modern economics both in the distance. But it cannot be alleged that any radical change has taken place in Mr. Kingsley's style of thought and expression. Sympathy with all that is strong, fearless, honorable, and beautiful,—richness and profusion of color,—hopefulness, buoyancy, breadth of sunny light and general cheerfulness,—these we were formerly accustomed to from Mr. Kingsley, and these are present still. But the old recklessness of assertion, the

old excitement and feverish haste, the old boisterousness of tone, the old extravagance of conception, meet us still.

The object set before himself by Mr. Kingsley in writing *Westward Ho* was, as he informs us in his opening chapter, to do honor to the memory of England's heroes of 1588, the time of the Armada, the Drakes, the Hawkinesses, the Gilberts, the Raleighs, the Grenvilles, the Oxenhamns, men not only of England but of Devon; and, honoring them, to proclaim to Englishmen the "same great message which the songs of Troy, and the Persian wars, and the trophies of Marathon and Salamis, spoke to the hearts of all true Greeks of old."

Both the aim here indicated and the subject chosen merit high commendation. The period of British history to which Mr. Kingsley leads us back, affords rich and varied materials for the epic poet, the historian, and the historical novelist. Stirring and lofty incident, well-marked, strong, and noble character, splendid and diversified coloring, equally abound. It was the time when the nations were arranging themselves after the mighty convulsion of the Reformation. The work occupied several centuries, and Mr. Kingsley contemplates one of the most important parts of the imposing process. The spirit of Protestantism had awokened. Superstition, its eye bleared and dim with the darkness of a thousand years, had staggered and reeled, with groping hands that seemed about to fall powerless, in the shafts of the far-stretching moral dawn. But another spirit had come up upon the earth, a spirit whose birth-place, can we hesitate to say, was in the nether deep of hell: the spirit of Jesuitism. Into the tottering frame of Superstition this spirit entered, lending a new throb to its fainting heart, arousing it once more to assert its sway. Then began a great contest: its theatre the old and new

worlds, and the great oceans by which they are encompassed; its actors the nations that led the van of civilization. The nations which, at the period chosen by Mr. Kingsley, specially supported the contest, were England and Spain. In England, reigned Elizabeth. Her character was not of the noblest. Vanity might be pardoned; but the hand of time will never efface the dark stains of cruelty and hypocrisy from that queenly brow: and Mr. Kingsley, chivalrous as he is, might have attained a higher nobleness than that of chivalry, the nobleness of dauntless and undeviating devotion to truth, by rather damping, on this account, his enthusiasm for "Gloriana." But whatever her failings, Elizabeth represented much of what was noblest in her time: her intellect was calm and sagacious: and she had the will of a sovereign born. She was surrounded by a constellation of able and courageous men, who served her with the loyalty of subjects to their monarch, and with the devotion of true knights to a noble lady. Flattery, in the court of Elizabeth, seems to deserve a less ignoble name. We shall not say it was in small and sordid selfishness that Raleigh laid his mantle under her feet, or that the gentle Spenser warbled silver strains of adulation in her ear. Turning from England to Spain, the prospect, though contrasted, is perhaps equally remarkable. Perhaps no nation of modern times has presented an appearance so well fitted to attract the poet or dramatist, as that presented by Spain in the sixteenth century. The Spaniard alone among Europeans retained the ancient devotion to Rome; a devotion unaffected by doubt, unbroken by inquiry; a devotion unmeasured in degree and which suggests the infinite. Such devotion cannot exist without imparting to the character of man or nation a certain austere grandeur, a certain epic sublimity. But this was not the only

circumstance which renders the Spaniard of the sixteenth century an object worthy of contemplation. His countrymen had led the way to the new world. His country was the leading power in Europe. Combining the pride and valor of antiquity, with the spirit of enterprise then beginning to mark itself as a characteristic of modern times; strong in faith as an old Hebrew, yet crafty, cruel, and indomitable; he exhibits the finest effects of light and shade, the subtlest blending of good and evil. His figure might have been painted by a Rembrandt: his character might have been studied by a Shakspeare.

To all this we must add a consideration of the stage on which such actors as these played their part. The grandeurs of the western world were then unfolding themselves, like a mighty panorama, to the eyes of Europe; and if we would conceive aright the effect produced by that grand panorama, we must heighten its natural colors, as now known and defined by us, with all the hues cast over it by an awakening and excited imagination. In our own time, we have seen the nations startled, allured, and set in motion, by gold. Westward and southward, to the ends of the earth, men have rushed to its witching gleam. But the poetry, the wonder, the enchantment, which hovered over the gold regions of the sixteenth century, are here no longer. We know all about the matter now. We examine the country geologically. We pound the quartz with engines, We search the dross heap with mercury. All is clear, precise, scientific, prosaic. We call the auriferous localities, diggings; a word hardly yet adapted for an epic poem! We know exactly what we have to expect when we go out. If we find one or two nuggets, we are fortunate men; but our principal occupations must be digging, with aching back, in a grave-like pit, and splashing and

rinsing among mud and puddle. The country, too, in which we must work, is of the commonplace. Venturing into the interior, of Australia at least, we may perish for want of water. The natives are wretched Bushmen; the animals opossums and kangaroos. How different was it in the days of Cortes and Pizarro, of Drake and Raleigh! If you went out with a few venturesome companions, you might find a kingdom, amass untold treasures, and eat from dishes of gold. You expected to see the yellow metal glittering on the mountain-side. The roots of the herb you plucked up by the wayside might be intertwined with wreaths of silver. You had heard of the golden city of Manoa, in the midst of its sacred lake, where the eye lit only on gold. Wise and sober men assured you of the existence of this city, and the wandering Indians who told the tale, themselves believed it. The known wonders of Mexico and Peru seemed to make nothing impossible. Far away in the west, bosomed in forests to which the woods of Europe were shrubberies, and over which gleamed a thousand flowers, seated in that mystic lake, Manoa was, for at least a century, the point towards which the eyes of the daring and adventurous in the old lands were turned. The magnificence of the other physical conditions of the New World corresponded with its interest as the region of exhaustless wealth. The Andes overtopped the Alps, the European rivers dwindled to rivulets beside Amazon and La Plata. The condor soared among the peaks and snows of the mountains, the jaguar prowled amid the endless forests. Birds, whose plumage vied with the brilliancy of the flowers around them, thronged the river banks, perching on the boughs of gigantic trees, at whose foot crocodiles lay basking in the sun. Let it now be conceived that all this was borne to the nations of Europe on the

shadowy wings of rumor, and came with all the power of novelty upon peoples still apt to wonder; and some idea will be formed of the witching splendors which encircled America in the eyes of Europe, in the sixteenth century.

With such materials as these, the fervid imagination of Mr. Kingsley could scarcely have failed to produce a powerful effect. No one can arise from his pages, however hasty his perusal of the book, without having had his conception of all connected with the period brought out in vivid clearness. What we have said can convey but a very faint idea of Mr. Kingsley's luxuriant description and fine enthusiasm. His delineations of character, too, are by no means unsuccessful. The English sea-captains of the period, those

“ Adventurous hearts who barter'd bold  
Their English blood for Spanish gold,”

are brought before us face to face. There is, indeed, no attempt made to depict the highest minds of the time in their highest employments. We are brought once or twice to glance for a moment into the councils of the nation, and have a pretty distinct idea of the views entertained by the great actors in the event of the book—the defeat of the Armada. But Sir Amyas Leigh is really nothing better than a rough, shrewd, resolute sea-captain; one of a class which may have influenced the destinies of England, but hardly such an one as would individually exercise an important influence on them. We doubt not, however, that precisely such men as this Sir Amyas wrested their gold from the Spaniards in that century, burned and ravaged along the Spanish main, and prowled like wolves of the ocean for the silver fleet. As we should have expected, Mr. Kingsley has made them somewhat too talkative, but we think that, in knowledge of the value of silence, and

conception of the energy which seeks no vent in words, there has been, since the days of *Alton Locke* and *Yeast*, a marked improvement.

Nor has Mr. Kingsley failed on the side of Spain. He succeeds in fixing in his reader's intellectual vision, with a power and boldness which give assurance that it will not pass away, that figure of the Spaniard of the sixteenth century. We mark his intense egotism, his national pride, his boundless avarice, his cunning, and, above all, his cruelty. We hate his cold, clear, inevitable eye, his iron brow, his closed and determined lip. But just as we are about to turn from him in loathing, he is brought within the limits at once of art and of nature, and we feel that we have still a sympathy in which to embrace him; for we mark his dauntless valor. The contrast and the union of his qualities Mr. Kingsley skilfully brings out; and what acquaintance we have with the history of the period, convinces us that the distinct and striking portrait is closely accordant with fact.

So far we can proceed with honest heartiness in admiration and applause of *Westward Ho!* But now we must change our tone. It is not too much to say that every element of truth and beauty in the book is all but neutralized, by the presence of other elements, neither of truth nor of beauty. In construction of plot, Mr. Kingsley never displayed remarkable skill. But his plot here—the whole machinery of his novel—is an agglomeration of extravagance and absurdity. The love affair, though in some of its touches drawn from the life, is, on the whole, preposterous. As one passes from volume to volume, he is beset by all the adjectives his vocabulary commands expressive of prodigy, abortion and folly, each seeming to claim a part in characterizing the successive absurdities. Once we lose

sight of the love stories and their dependent circumstances, all becomes comparatively right and true. Mr. Kingsley, if his gaze is at times unsteady, if his hand is somewhat apt to shake, may yet be said to be at home with reality. His descriptions of South American river-scenery are masterly. A comparison of his pictured pages with those of Humboldt demonstrates minute accuracy. His sketches of the landscapes of Devon are still better; distinct, bold, beautiful. Of his treatment of strictly historical characters, we have spoken. But of his management of plots and love stories, we should rather *not* speak. Readers shall judge for themselves. We must be excused for glancing somewhat particularly at the incidents of *Westward Ho!* Their eloquence will prove far more expressive than ours.

In the first chapter of the book, we are introduced to the hero, a boy of fourteen, by no means clever, but extremely good-natured, and in physical proportions, a young Hercules. Of course he is good-looking, has yellow locks, etc., etc. His name is Amyas Leigh. He is the son of Leigh of Burrough, near Bideford, then a considerable town on the coast of Devon. Strolling through the streets of Bideford, he is attracted by a group around a certain Mr. Oxenham, a mariner, who has sailed to the Spanish Main, and proposes to sail again. The right-hand man of this Oxenham is a wild, rude, stalwart seaman, named Salvation Yeo, who, in the course of the tale, becomes a Puritan of the Ironside order, and approves himself, if sharp and biting as vinegar, yet true as steel. Young Master Amyas has scarcely come up with the group, before we learn that his heart is already set upon sea-life, and that his dreams by night and by day are of the Spanish Main. But he knows he is yet young, and being a sensible fellow, is contented to wait. Mr. Oxenham sails on his voyage,

Salvation Yeo along with him; for a time both go off the boards. Meanwhile the father of Amyas dies, leaving two sons—the hero of the book, and Frank, older than he, a scholar, courtier, perfect gentleman, and bold as a lion, yet of tiny frame and delicate intellectual texture. After a time, Amyas, tired of being flogged by a school-master whom he has outgrown, one day playfully breaks his slate over the pedagogue's head; whereupon his godfather, Sir Richard Grenville, and the disrespectfully-treated instructor, conclude that his studies of the humanities may be considered complete. At this point we hear of Rose Salterne, *yelept* the Rose of Torridge, who, albeit she has no engaging quality, beyond beauty and a fondness for romantic narrative, has struck to the heart and vanquished every eligible youth in the neighborhood, and among the rest both Frank and Amyas. We consider it a libel upon Devonshire to relate this universal falling in love. It is true that Rose turns out better than was to have been expected; but in her girlhood she is nothing but a gay, sprightly, frivolous, village belle, of kind heart enough no doubt, and clear harmless nature, but without a trait of such power as might lead captive a strong man. And were there no other pretty girls in Devon? The fact is, Mr. Kingsley's ladies, especially in the commencement of the book, are insipid; we have not been able to care a straw about any one of them. Be the case as it might, it is distinctly asserted of the young men of Devon that they all, with one accord, fell in love with the Rose of Torridge; and as the proceeding was at first extremely foolish, its folly was persevered in with admirable consistency. Rose probably appreciated the silliness of their conduct, for, as the reader will be gratified to hear, she cared for none of them.

In due time, Amyas sails on his first voyage, going round

the world with Drake, whom, ever after, he regards as a chief and hero among men. Of the voyage we have no particulars, but, after much festivity on his return, he goes to Ireland, to fight the Spaniards who have landed at Smerwick, and meets Raleigh and Spenser. Here he has the misfortune to take a prisoner, named Don Guzman Maria Magdalena Sotomayar de Soto, who at first is all that could be wished, and gives prospect of a rich ransom, but is the cause ultimately of wo without end. Amyas finds something to engage him in Ireland, and sends his captive over to Devon, to wait his arrival. Here the Don has, of course, little to do, and being a handsome fellow, with a knack of telling tales of his escapes and valorous deeds, with an interesting sadness hanging about him — having, in short, touches of Othello, of the Childe, and of Rochester, in his composition — he is far more likely to be successful with the young ladies than the mealy-mouthed lovers of Rose Salterne. Many of the matches in the power of this young lady would have been excellent. Amyas was sure of promotion, and was a hearty, noble fellow. Frank was perfect in courtesy, and sunned in the favor of Queen Elizabeth. There were bonny estates enough in Devon which she might have called her own. In fact, whether they had declared or not — Amyas had not — there were multitudes of suitors to choose among, any one of whom would have made her happy. But this Don Guzman was decidedly objectionable. He was a Spaniard, a Papist, a captive, one who came with no introductions, and of whose prospects you could have no distinct idea. He falls in love, however, with Rose, though not in the fiery way in which the Devonshire youth chose to do so, and she now, finding a suitor for once independent and able to do without her, responds passionately to his affection. Rose elopes with

her lover, and goes across to America, his wedded wife; a spirited proceeding, though, we allow, not unexampled. But now the mischief begins to thicken. Frank had, erewhile, persuaded the Devonshire suitors to form themselves into a brotherhood, united by common devotion to the lady, and bound both to confer their friendship on the man she finally preferred, and to stand like good knights between her and any evil. Finding themselves outwitted by the Don, the young gentlemen are, of course, considerably irritated, and since it is now an impossible case that any good can result from an attempt at interference, they forthwith resolve to interfere. They find a ship, call it Rose, elect Amyas captain, and set sail after the bridal party for the Spanish Main. One of the ship's company is Salvation Yeo. He, it may be remembered, sailed with Mr. Oxenham. That individual, a person of very imperfect character, came to no good. The last words Yeo heard from his lips were an entreaty to take care of his little girl, a child of seven; and the fixed idea of Yeo's life is now to find this "little maid." She unfortunately has got into the hands of the Spaniards, and her chances of turning up, unless she happen to be needed by the novelist, are few indeed. It is not mentioned that, on the occasion of the departure of the good ship Rose, the shore was lined with spectators, who expressed their interest in the enterprise by shouts of laughter. But certainly no expedition so ridiculous ever set sail before or after, in fact or fiction, and we can only pronounce the whole affair a joke too far overdone to be amusing. Meanwhile, the married pair had been as happy as possible. Rose declared afterwards, that at this period she was in Paradise. At least we may conclude that there were no serious quarrels. But, lo! there appears a cormorant, to bring dismay into this

South American Eden. It is a young Roman Catholic, formerly a lover of the bride, and a cousin of Frank and Amyas, wholly under the influence of the Jesuits, and disposed, in this household, to do as much mischief as he can. He is perhaps the most watery edition of Iago that has appeared, as is Rose of Desdemona; for in the *skeleton* of Mr. Kingsley's tale there is here a singular resemblance to that not very recondite history of Othello. The modern Iago strives to awaken jealousy in the breast of Don Guzman. In this his attempt would probably have been vain, had not those moonstruck lovers come peering across the Atlantic, at a time when every sensible friend knows he is not wanted. Of course, if a whole cargo of lovers come after your wife, you may have some qualms about the exclusiveness of her affection; and if the most insane of these come into your garden at night, when you are from home, and your wife, though with the purest intentions, finds herself in the garden at the same time, is it in human penetration to pierce the falsehood and malice of a Jesuitic backbiter, who is on the watch for suspicious circumstances, and probably believes in an assignation himself? The end is, that the Inquisition gets hold of both Frank Leigh and the Rose of Torridge, and they die at the stake. The ship Rose now engages in a bloody conflict with certain Spanish vessels, and, being unable to stand a homeward voyage, and proper refitting being impossible, is run ashore, and burned. Its crew, with Amyas at their head, set out on the search for Manoa, and wander for years amid the South American forests.

After the death of his brother, and his former beloved, it becomes the one aim of the existence of Amyas to wreak his vengeance on the Spaniards, and particularly to come to mortal combat with Don Guzman. Yeo still keeps looking

out for his "little maid," and, as every reader of discernment will have guessed, he is ultimately blessed with the attainment of his wish. How this comes to pass; how a fair being, holding partly of Helen of Loch Katrine, partly of Dido queen of Carthage, partly of Diana, huntress of the Aonian wilds, and partly of an Indian squaw, suddenly appeared on an island in the Meta; how, by slow degrees, she came to honor the white men and love one of them; how she was the queen and something like the goddess of an Indian tribe; how she followed the party when they departed, and could not be got rid of even when they arrived in England; how her savagery was eradicated, and she became all that Wordsworth demanded in a perfect woman nobly planned; and how, as is so often the case, the course of true love comes, in the long run, straight and smooth; all this is deliberately detailed to us by Mr. Kingsley! It would be difficult to say whether the incidents connected with the love story of which the Rose of Torridge is the heroine, or those of the touching tale in which this interesting beauty of the woods is made to figure, are the more childish and extravagant. It gives such narratives a peculiar and exquisite zest, to remember that they are from the pen of a clergyman of the Church of England, of decided philosophical leanings, and who believes himself not to belong to the Minerva Press or Rosewater schools. It is strange that a writer, with not a little historical knowledge, and some command over reality, should take his place as a constructor of plot, somewhere between a nursery-maid and an Arabian romancer.

We are strongly moved to hazard the assertion, that Mr. Kingsley has never yet found the most suitable channel for his genius. His personal likings are too intense for a dramatist; he possesses not the calm thought or invention ne-

cessary in the construction of an effective plot or the conduct of a protracted narrative; his province is not that of pure argument. But he lacks not lyric fire, and every tone that he would draw from the lyre would be a tone of nobleness. Were he to cast off every trammel of plot or action, and break forth into glorious choral songs, tingling with sympathy for the poor and oppressed, glittering in those hues which are too dazzling in prose, he might, perhaps, give the age a few lyrics as certain of immortality as *The Psalm of Life*.

On the whole, Mr. Kingsley must be pronounced a man of rich and versatile genius, his powers of great range and excellent quality, his nature kindly, aspiring, and free from guile. His deficiencies are no less obvious, and we cannot hesitate to affirm that he lacks in many matters of capital importance. So devoid is he of calmness, method, and the power of seeing things in their relative proportions and bearings, that he scarcely deserves the name of thinker. His mind is of that kind, in dealing with which it is even more than ordinarily absurd, to confound the actual beliefs with the logical, to consider assertion of fact or promulgation of theory, as necessarily implying acceptance of the collateral circumstances of the one, or intelligent belief in the philosophical grounds of the other. Mr. Kingsley's system of thought is an eclecticism without a central point. Platonism, Fichtean Ego-worship, Carlylian hero-worship, Christianity, mingle their elements in his mind, chaotic in their confusion, though gorgeous in their tints. He seems as one sailing on a wild sea, the view obscured with flying foam, but the sun, from above, lighting the prospect, here and there, with glorious bursts of illumination. He cannot plant his foot firmly on the deck, and look fixedly, until he once for all knows that the shore lies *there*. His eye glan-

ees from point to point of the horizon, wherever a sun-gleam breaks out, wherever a new iris passes wavering along the foam. Every flash of beauty he hails; into every opening, under the fringe of foam and cloud, he peers. But he forgets that the essential point is to learn the precise bearings of the shore; for the night cometh, and the shore of truth is one. It is not an altogether seemly spectacle, this of a man tossed about at the mercy of his instincts, restless and agitated, not impressed with manly consistency and calmness by a reason that believes and a faith that knows! The great problem of the place occupied by Christianity in human history, its relation to human interests, its connection with human ethics, he cannot be said to have solved. In his novels, with all their elevating morality, there is no solution expressly given; what is still more important, there is none tacitly implied. We do not see that the virtues of his characters bud upon the Christian Vine. We cannot perceive in what sense he understands that Christianity makes all things new. And, as a Christian minister, this is what all men have a right to demand of him. You cannot claim of a man that his intellect be profound or his taste exquisite, but you may demand of every man that he hold what light he has clearly before you, that he have strength and honesty to say he is this and not that, that he have a faith and know it.

## II.

### THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY.

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY was born in 1800, the eldest son of the well-known Zachary Macaulay, a wealthy West Indian merchant. By birth he is English; by extraction he is Scotch. The early part of his education was conducted at home; in 1818, he commenced his university studies at Trinity College, Cambridge. Of his university career we know nothing more than that it was precisely what might be inferred from his course and character in after years. He was very highly distinguished as a classical scholar, was known as a leading speaker in college societies, and, for his wide and varied acquirements, which he displayed in brilliant conversation as well as in debate, was called by his fellows “the omniscient Macaulay.” He was still a youth when he produced two pieces in verse—the one a fragment, the other a finished and remarkably fine production—entitled, respectively, the *Armada* and *Ivry*. Then, we think, one who could read the literary auguries, and who had his eye on the young student, might have discerned some distinct glimmerings of that light that was to shine with so clear and fascinating a radiance. The classical distinction might be witnessed every day, the brilliancy of conversation and spirit in debate might excite neither surprise nor expectation, thousands of young men

have versified, and with considerable vigor; but when very high classic attainments were united with singular knowledge of modern history and literature, and a fine, strong, clear gleam was thrown over all by poetic fire, the union might be pronounced rare and hopeful. We would form no common ideas of the youth who could offer us for inspection such a picture as this:—

“ With his white head unbonneted the stout old sheriff comes;  
Behind him march the halberdiers, before him sound the drums;  
His yeomen round the market-cross make clear an ample space,  
For there behooves him to set up the standard of her Grace.  
And haughtily the trumpets peal, and gayly dance the bells,  
And slow upon the laboring wind the royal blazon swells.  
Look how the lion of the sea lifts up his ancient crown,  
And underneath his deadly paw treads the gay lilies down.  
So stalk'd he when he turn'd to flight, on that famed Picard field,  
Bohemia's plume, and Genoa's bow, and Cæsar's eagle shield.  
So glared he when at Agincourt in wrath he turn'd to bay,  
And crush'd and torn beneath his claws the princely hunters lay.  
Ho! strike the flagstaff deep, sir knight; ho! scatter flowers, fair  
maids;  
Ho! gunners, fire a loud salute; ho! gallants, draw your blades;  
Thou, sun, shine on her joyously; ye breezes, waft her wide;  
Our glorious SEMPER EADEM, the banner of our pride.”

Here are displayed an eye for the picturesque, a power of grouping, and a command of color, which the first painter in England, either with pen or paint brush, might have emulated. In the same piece, the faculty which has been used with such signal success in the *Lays of Rome*—the faculty of perceiving the musical cadence of particular names, and introducing them to deepen and strengthen the melody of his verses—was displayed as finely and effec-

tively as it has ever since been. In *Irry*, a warm, youthful enthusiasm burns through every line, and an attentive observer might have discerned that there was much in its glowing fervor to distinguish it from early productions in general. The picturesqueness found its origin in a happy selection and grouping of telling facts and events, with neither the dimness nor the glare of verbiage; the spirit and ardor were an echo of the feelings of the time and scene which formed the subject of the poem, and owed nothing to sounding commonplace or redundant adjective. The flowers were the lilies of France; the snow-white plume was the very one which Henry wore; the flag of Lorraine was historically painted; and they all took their places in the artistic picture without any aid from Minerva, or Vulcan, or the steeds of Mars. Already it might be said that this man rode a Cappadocian courser of rare breed, and no common hack; he was already far beyond the general band; he had bidden adieu to commonplace. He was not yet known to his countrymen in general; but the time was at hand when he was to emerge from the calm regions of privaey and silence, and become a name forever.

He was about twenty-five years of age when he left college; he was "fresh from college" when he wrote his essay on Milton. The step was now taken irreversibly; the author of "Milton" became at once a marked and applauded man. He might well be so; there were few such essays in our literature at the time. It was written in that speaking style, where the eye of the author, writing in all the fervor of generous enthusiasm, seems to flash from every line; it rolled on like a molten stream, glowing and impetuous; and, when you looked, it seemed as if gold and pearls had been lavishly thrown in, and all rushed down in princely magnificence. Amazement at the range of learning was

heightened by its rare accuracy and minuteness ; astonishment at the profusion of imagery was enhanced by its splendor, freshness, and exquisite point ; and the sound heart rejoiced above all, that the genius, which was ministered to by such taste and such treasures, was kindled and presided over by noble sentiment and devotion to truth. The hand that drew the portrait of Dante, it was felt, possessed a strength and a precision of touch, which might add many a deathless portrait to our national gallery of fame ; the magazine of literary adornment, in which were ranged — all, it appeared, equally ready to the hand — the terrors of Æschylus and the flowers of Ariosto, the facts of history and the colors of fiction, seemed inexhaustible ; and the eye which, with sympathetic fire, gazed across the intervening years to the men of England's noblest time, with a glance of proud recognition, was at once believed to possess a power of vision capable of penetrating far and deep into the recesses of our history. The sensation created by the appearance of this essay was, from all we have been able to learn, profound. Mr. Gilfillan mentions that Robert Hall, when sixty years old, commenced the study of Italian, in order to verify Macaulay's references to Dante. We think any amount of applause was justifiable ; Mr. Macaulay wove a brilliant crown of amaranth and gold for one of the noblest men that England ever produced, and it was right that its gleam should be reflected on himself.

We have now arrived at a turning-point in Mr. Macaulay's history. In the essay on Milton, he wrote with a fervor which seemed scarcely restrainable by the forms of composition ; he scattered his riches around him like an ancient Peruvian monarch, with inexhaustible wealth, but knowing not its value ; his decisions were firm and clear, but brightened by a rapture as of poetry. That this would

to some extent alter, was plain; but there were various ways in which it might change. The thought might deepen, the decoration might be laid on more sparingly, but the fervid, poetic sympathy with what was noble and true, might endure or even strengthen; then might the panegyrist of Milton, though certainly with no such regal tread as his mighty countryman, emulate Milton himself. Or, all exuberance might be restrained, and the most rigid censorship be established over every portion of the style; while the enthusiasm and fervor of youth might be chained submissively to the ear of a carefully-going logic. We speak in the language neither of censure nor of applause; we mention merely a fact, when we say, that the latter of these two supposable cases was, approximately at least, the actual one. Mr. Macaulay's style became measured, careful, and comparatively cold; in his mode of thought, he exchanged the fervid brilliancy of poetry, for the clear, frosty light of bare logic.

We must here be permitted to express the extreme difficulty we have experienced in endeavoring to analyze Mr. Macaulay's history, as a writer and thinker, and exhibit it as a consistent and complete development. We feel that we require some more information than his works afford to account for the phenomena. To trace the formation of his style to a certain point, is easy; to discern the consistency of his system of opinion, and the strict correspondence of his style with this system, when each is completely developed, is also a practicable task; but to assign and trace the causes which transmuted the impetuous, aspiring, impassioned writer of the essay upon Milton, into the calm, unimpassioned, practical Macaulay, who wrote the essay upon Bacon and the essay upon Ranke, is a problem of which we can offer nothing better than a conjectural solu-

tion. We have sometimes fancied that the glowing fires of youthful enthusiasm had been damped by some youthful sorrow; that, from the pinions of those golden dreams, on which in boyhood and early youth we float, he had been dashed suddenly upon the hard, actual ground of life, and had risen a calm scrutinizer, a logical examiner, and a scorner of the ideal: and we have very often imagined that it was all brought about by a too impetuous recoil from anything approaching to bombast, from any appearance of commonplace; that he heard the general vociferation and rant about ideals and infinites, about tyrants and slaves, about liberty and despotism, and, feeling his English common sense outraged by the din, took refuge in a strictly practical set of opinions, and a measured, unimpassioned style. Whatever the cause, the Macaulay of youth was different from the Macaulay of manhood; and we proceed to set forth, to the best of our ability, what the Macaulay of manhood is.

To indicate what we deem the highest order of mind, we shall instance that of Plato; the example is trite, but we have not space for one which cannot be speedily despatched. And we need scarcely say that it is but in one aspect that we glance at the mind of Plato. That aspect we in a word define, its attitude towards the infinite. It was a mighty force, and, being a mighty force, could not spend itself in shattering small fences; it directed itself mainly to penetrate the clouds of mystery above and below, to answer the dread questions which, like swords of flaming fire, tokens of imprisonment, encompass man on earth. Such a mind sees the practical, but holds it of small comparative value; in every direction it penetrates as far as a human mind can penetrate, and then, with a tear such as angels weep, gazes up the height which it cannot scale;

if we have here our all, it exclaims with Fichte, then a doctrine of universal suicide is the only gospel for man.

In strong contrast to this order of minds, is that at the head of which, by universal consent, stands that of Bacon. Why forever attempt, it says, to scale the infinite? why still invest a city whose walls reach unto heaven, and round which the human race has sat in vain since its infancy? Let us sow fields and plant vineyards here in the plain below, and then may we hope for a happiness that is realizable.

To this last order of minds, of which the grades are innumerable, Mr. Macaulay belongs, and has belonged ever since his mind settled into manhood. He speaks not of ideals; he generalizes calmly and cautiously; he rests content, where he deems a difficulty insoluble, in the conviction that it is so. He will have only the good things he can see, and will fly to no others that he knows not of. His mind is of that sort which rests satisfied in the fabric of human knowledge as it is, and is urged by no insatiable longings to discover how its foundations are connected with the infinite; which declares the barriers that obstruct man simply insuperable, and which contentedly devotes its energies to improve and beautify the space distinctly within those barriers; which concerns itself with the actual, not the ideal; which keeps by the natural as distinguished from the supernatural. This character is seen in all his opinions. It is ministered to by faculties of a high order: a memory of amazing range and minuteness; a judgment, in the questions which alone it discusses, clear, discriminative, sound; a taste delicately fastidious; and an imagination, not creative, or, to use a more correct word, combinative, but extremely clear-seeing. We shall endeavor to exhibit his fundamental opinions, in a brief survey of his

views on *religion*, on *philosophy*, and on *government*; and shall then notice his manner of communicating these as a writer and speaker.

In his religion, Mr. Macaulay is certainly not ideal. A certain set of virtues are to be practised, a certain set of vices are to be shunned; and the whole is transacted, as it were, by rule and measure. We do not like to speak of the infinite element in humanity, and far less of the organ by which, according to some, we become acquainted with the infinite. Yet we assert that there is undoubtedly in the human mind a feeling of wants which earth cannot supply, and a set of questionings which time cannot answer. It is this looking, earnestly gazing aspect which distinguishes man as man; and we can recognize little in the religion which does not, directly and constantly, concern itself with the agency of God and the scenes of eternity. In Mr. Macaulay's religious system, we can discern little or none of this connection with what is infinite; we have seen no traces of fiery conflict with doubt, we have seen nothing which would lead us to believe that he did not consider those doubts which shake strong, nay, the strongest minds, mere delusions, and esteem the victory, which, in an agony of eloquent joy, they proclaim that they have won, a mere dream. We shall prove and illustrate our remarks by an instance or two.

In his far-famed essay on Ranke's *History of the Popes*, Mr. Macaulay remarks of the Church of Rome:—"She saw the commencement of all the governments, and of all the ecclesiastical establishments that now exist in the world; and we feel no assurance that she is not destined to see the end of them all. She was great and respected before the Saxon had set foot in Britain, before the Frank had passed the Rhine, when Grecian eloquence still flourished

in Antioch, when idols were still worshipped in the temple of Mecca. And she may still exist, in undiminished vigor, when some traveller from New Zealand shall, in the midst of a vast solitude, take his stand on a broken arch of London Bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's. . . . When we reflect on the tremendous assaults which she has survived, we find it difficult to conceive in what way she is to perish."

We shall not pass in review the temporal and earthly causes which Mr. Macaulay examines as bearing on the question of the endurance of the Papacy; we shall merely suggest a view of the subject which he does not take, and a possible method of destruction which has escaped his notice. Suppose there are elements in the settlement of the question which are out of the sphere of earth altogether; suppose it is true that a God, whose will is expressed in millions of solar systems, really manages the matter; and suppose that he has breathed into one system the breath of life, and made it a living, an immortal soul, while he has destined the other to abide for a time, and then to pass away forever! This belief Mr. Macaulay cannot consider very crude or antiquated; we should not much value the Protestantism of him who did not put his trust in this for the endless existence of his system; and yet it is ignored. We can scarce conceive anything more ghastly or barren than the view which Mr. Macaulay gives us; looking down the vista of the ages, he sees nothing but the old war of systems and names, a haggard, cheerless region, inhabited by fogs and sleety showers, and cold, biting tempests, without any ray of beneficent light from above, to irradiate the gloom and restrain the confusion. We acknowledge a brighter hope: we look for a dawn whose beams of heaven-born light will smite the woman

of the Seven Hills with blindness, and bid her pass, in her garments draggled with the best blood of earth, into everlasting night. We still believe there is light thrown on the matter by that old and singular passage, which, on any hypothesis save ours, is surely a difficult enigma, and which speaks of a certain “wicked” which was to be revealed, and which, it is said, “the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.” We must concede to Mr. Macaulay that, counting on the operation only of earthly causes, his arguing has great force; but his practical religion is utterly insufficient to give a satisfactory decision on the point. And, even on the lowest hypothesis, Mr. Macaulay’s conclusion excites our utter astonishment. Reason and Scripture, he tells us, were on the side of the Protestants; and does he really feel satisfied, under the shade of a creed which grants to what is contrary to reason—that is, what is untrue—an equal duration, an equal possibility of duration, with that which is true? It is a doctrine to drive mankind mad. We believe that truth bears with it the seal-royal of Jehovah, nay, that truth, in all its forms, is the voice of Jehovah, which originally created and ever supports the universe; and, if this belief is taken away—though we can certainly have no more grief, since every sorrow is swallowed up in one unutterable wo—it is mockery to talk of joy. With a man of earnest religious mind, the first question in settling the matter would surely be—“Which system is true?” Here is a complex and marvelously perfect mechanism; as perfect in all its adornments, and as during, to all appearance, as that famed palace, which once arose like an exhalation, and which owed its origin, as we poor fanatics believe, to a somewhat similar agency; it is said to be false in the core. Here, on the

other side, is an unassuming system, divided, shattered, talking in many dialects, deficient in machinery; but in it there is believed to lie somewhere the very truth of God. Which will endure, and which will pass away? If there is a God who is true, the question is simply—which is true? if there is no God, the matter is more complicated. Here, then, very strikingly, does Mr. Macaulay hold by the natural as distinguished from the supernatural.

We may here, as fitly as elsewhere, glance at Mr. Macaulay's strongly expressed opinion respecting the source of the gross immorality of the Restoration. He traces it simply to the Puritans: their rule, he says, produced public hypocrisy, which, when it could, flung off the mask, and showed the face of public infamy. Now, we do not deny that the Puritans, earnest, godly, truly noble men as they were, directed themselves too much to externals, and proscribed, in some instances, what they should not have meddled with. But Mr. Macaulay's analysis is, we must think, superficial: the source of the phenomenon he explains lies deeper—in the corrupt nature of man. We believe the principle was radically the same which we see acting, so often and so banefully, in the history of the Hebrew commonwealth. After each period of marked national godliness, there was a period of marked national decay; it was so after the era of Joshua, so after the era of Samuel, so after the era of David, so always. And was it the godlessness of those periods that occasioned the iniquity of the succeeding time? Surely not: it was the recoil from godlessness of the evil heart of man. The sun shone clear and bright, and beneficently warm; but a mist arose from the earth which darkened his face; and shall we say it was the shining which caused the darkness? No; we shall rather say that England at the Restoration “closed her Bible;”

that the radiance of that time was too bright for her dazzled eyes; that men love darkness rather than the light. Mr. Macaulay's account of the phenomenon embodies truth, but neither the whole truth, nor the most important truth in the matter.

When we turn to consider Mr. Macaulay's decisions concerning the religion of individuals as distinguished from that of systems, we find the same ignoring of the supernatural which meets us elsewhere. We hear of the "hysterical tears of such a soldier as Cromwell;" "Scarcely any madhouse," we are told, "could produce an instance of delusion so strong, or of misery so acute," as those of Bunyan in his early doubts, and struggles, and victory. Now, we can hardly think it possible that a man who ever passed through such mental conflicts as those of Bunyan or Cromwell could talk so; and Mr. Macaulay seems to ignore, as simply out of the question, the Christian doctrine — with which strict Christianity stands or falls — that there is really such a thing as spiritual influence from on high upon the human mind. *If* there is no God — *if* heaven and hell are illusions — *if* time is a reality, and eternity a dream — then Bunyan's woes and Cromwell's "hysterical tears" deserved a smile of mingled pity and contempt; but *if* there is a God — *if* heaven and hell are realities — *if* eternity is an infinite reality, and time a fleeting vision — or even if Bunyan and Cromwell *believed* so — then surely, when they considered their infinite concerns in danger, it was conceivable enough, or even logical, that they should be moved regarding them. "The hysterical tears of such a soldier as Cromwell!" Singular as it may look, such tears have not in general unnerved the arm of action. King David could wield his sword, could rule his kingdom, could hew the nations in pieces with right valor

and energy; but he wept more even than Cromwell. Paul felt his sins to be a fearful burden; yet he was no vague arguer, and no loitering worker. In fact, if we examine, the mystery seems to vanish. The belief that there is an Eye that “slumbers not nor sleeps”—an Eye which guards the universe—continually fixed upon each motion, and penetrating every thought—seems to have a tendency, which can be traced, to make one do his work with his might, uncaring what earth can do to him or give to him, but caring, with unmeasured concern, to perform the task appointed him.

This fatal defect in Mr. Macaulay’s religious views vitiates his opinions on two subjects, to which we can but refer: on the great religious revolution of the sixteenth century, and the *Pilgrim’s Progress* of Bunyan. It renders his account of the Reformation, actually and literally, an account of the growth of a forest, without once mentioning the principle of life which gave it animation. To explain this principle of life is not requisite, but to acknowledge its presence is utterly in dispensable. Mr. Macaulay gives us those few causes of the great movement of the sixteenth century, which may be found in the state of the respective reformed nations at the time of the Reformation; but he never asks whether the doctrine of Protestantism was an emanation from the throne of God, and we never hear that intense personal earnestness to flee from the wrath to come really kindled the flame which set Europe in a blaze.

There is incorrectness—at least, deficiency—in Mr. Macaulay’s views respecting the *Pilgrim’s Progress*. These have been much spoken of, and much admired, but we cannot join fully in the applause. Here, again, the *vital element* is ignored—the fact that Bunyan believed he was

clothing in a garb, which is formed almost entirely of Scriptural imagery, the truths of Christian experience. It is not because it is a literary masterpiece, or for any literary reason, that Bunyan's work has been so popular with all classes; but because it reads off, in a dialect which every peasant-Christian can understand, the feelings which every peasant-Christian has known. That the literary excellence of Bunyan's famous work is very high, we admit; that Mr. Macaulay has spoken beautifully of that excellence, is also true; and we deny not that the work has been admired by many who could not read it in the spirit thereof; yet we must assert that Mr. Macaulay, in criticising it, has omitted an all-important element.

The order and the depth of Mr. Macaulay's religious sentiments may be illustrated by a momentary glance at the man whom, of all others, he appears to have selected for admiration. In speaking of Addison, the cold, accurate measurement of his developed style seems to warm into something akin to the fervid enthusiasm which guided his pen when he wrote of Milton. Addison is the model virtuous man; immaculate, unoffending, turning a smiling face on all; but by no means a penetrating, fiery soul. Him Mr. Macaulay delights to honor, and by his creed, as it appears to us, Mr. Macaulay has shaped his own. Milton was a very different man from Addison; a much more questionable and daring spirit; one who believed his creed to be written in heaven, or to be none; a man in whose life may be found certain points which make even an ardent admirer question and doubt. But every spot is a spot in a garment of brightness; we can liken him to one of his own martial angels, passing over the earth, upon whose celestial armor certain stains, imparted by the foul atmosphere, abide for a time. Addison walked according to the

rules of virtue, and his path was smooth ; Milton trod along his rugged way, urged by the fire within, and found his path through this world a very stern and toilsome journey. Mr. Macaulay in his youth wrote of Milton in a strain which would have kindled the eye of the princely bard with sympathy ; Mr. Macaulay, in the fulness of his years, wrote of Addison in a strain of such softened beauty, with such a thorough appreciation of his virtue and talents, that the mild author of the *Spectator* would have approved and rejoiced.

In every instance, then, Mr. Macaulay's religion is seen to be of the easy-going, unoffending order ; it concerns not itself with any of the mysteries which torture the individual mind ; it ignores conversion in the sense in which Bunyan and Cromwell used the word ; it recognizes Christianity as a system of virtues and rules, and seems to proceed in the ignorance that it can be anything essentially different from a mere ethical system ; it is not pervaded with the spirit of that Book which the most earnest of the sons of men have believed to be a message from Heaven. His religion is the normal product of his mind ; it suffices for all ordinary matters of life, and concerns not itself with the ideal or the infinite. And here we must differ essentially with Mr. Macaulay ; whatever else may be bounded, religion must be ideal, must hold of the infinite, or is nothing ; its aim must be the glories of heaven, its morality the holiness of God.

Of Mr. Macaulay's philosophy, it is unnecessary to speak at length ; it corresponds strictly with the general structure of his mind. It is practical, wholly practical, immediately practical. In his essay on Bacon, his views are unfolded with unmistakable clearness. He contrasts the two grand orders of human intellect in the person of Bacon and of

Plato, and he speaks thus: "To sum up the whole, we should say that the aim of the Platonic philosophy was to exalt man into a God; the aim of the Baconian philosophy was to provide man with what he requires while he continues to be man. The aim of the Platonic philosophy was to raise us above vulgar wants; the aim of the Baconian philosophy was to supply our vulgar wants. The former aim was noble; but the latter was attainable. Plato drew a good bow; but, like Acestes in *Virgil*, he aimed at the stars; and therefore, though there was no want of strength or skill, the shot was thrown away. His arrow was indeed followed by a track of dazzling radiance, but it struck nothing:—

"Volans liquidis in nubibus arsit arundo,  
Signavitque viam flammis, tenuesque recessit  
Consumta in ventos."

Bacon fixed his eye on a mark which was placed on the earth, and within bowshot, and hit it in the white. The philosophy of Plato began in words, and ended in words; noble words, indeed, words such as were to be expected from the finest of human intellects exercising boundless dominion over the finest of human languages. The philosophy of Bacon began in observations, and ended in arts."

It is not in our province at present to inquire, whether Mr. Macaulay has, here and in the other paragraphs of his essay, given a precisely correct estimate of the Platonic and Baconian systems of philosophy; what we have quoted is sufficient to indicate the philosophical tendencies of the writer, and it is with him we here concern ourselves. Of his criticism of Plato, in this view, and his own philosophy as thence inferred, we say simply, that it again restricts itself to the finite, the temporal, the immediately practi-

cal. If there is no infinite towards which the mind of man must gaze, then is the philosophy of Plato, in great part, a mere abortion, born of vacancy; if the thoughts which wander through eternity indicate nothing, then is it a mere vagary. But, if this insatiable longing, which has moved the mightiest human minds; this profound feeling that the earth can never satisfy the immortal soul; this earnest calling, in all generations, to the earth below and the heaven above to tell us why and whence we are, and whither we go, are all intimations of some state whence we have fallen, and monitions towards some nobler dwelling-place than we now occupy; then the philosophy which concerns itself with these is a noble attendant upon humanity. I come not, it may say, to tell you how to till your ground, or to spin your flax; I cannot with demonstrable certainty tell you anything; but I can at least, in the voices of the noblest of earth's sons, warn you that there is something to be known, beyond what is seen; that the little world does not bound the wants or capabilities of man. The human mind has in all ages exclaimed, "I care not though you carpet my world with flowers, and roof my house with gold, and cover my table with dainties; I shall forever gaze up that wall, over which some clusters of heavenly fruit I can still discern hanging, though I cannot now touch them; and I will rather gaze wistfully at what reminds me of my ancient glory, and awakens a hope for eternity, than spend all my energies on what is really and utterly unable to make me happy." But, even on Mr. Macaulay's own grounds, we cannot grant that he has fairly represented the work done by the Platonic philosophy and ancient philosophy in general. He asks triumphantly what it did, and we venture to answer, It did much. Were we to shelter ourselves behind the grand fact, that "nothing

is which errs from law," we should hold ourselves justified in saying, that such an amount of human intellect was never absolutely wasted. But we must also express our conviction, that ancient philosophy did perform a most important part in the history of our world, and that its work is traceable. That work we can express in a single sentence: it prepared the nations for that better light which was to dawn, it slackened the fetters which bound the human mind, it turned the eyes of earnest men from the sensuous to the spiritual, and, sapping the foundations of a religion which was the product of human nature and of earth, made room for that spiritual, supersensual religion, which came down from God. What more it did, we need not inquire; we consider this a most important work.

But truth is one; there is no schism in the family of nature, there is no useless force in the armory of God. If the truth embodied in the philosophy of Bacon is carried to its limits, it must recognize the philosophy of Plato; if the philosophy of Plato is carried out, it in no way counteracts, but should beneficially shelter, the philosophy of Bacon. The philosophy of Bacon is based on the constancy and wisdom of nature; it bows down to facts. And is not the Platonic philosophy, and what represents it in all ages, at lowest, a great fact? Is it, then, the one fact in nature which is meaningless and futile? Is every talent of every handcraftsman made use of by the great thrifty Mother, and have her noblest and mightiest sons been mere harps, of the rarest mechanism, and of ravishing melody, which she has recklessly hung out to be played on by the vacant winds? No true Baconian can say so. Can the Platonist, again, deny that man, though, from his whirling sand-grain of a world, he gazes with wistful eye on the immensity around, and though that gaze be the most important fact

in his history, is yet a denizen of earth, and for the present has, as his first duty, to live? Surely not. The truth is, partiality of view always implies error. Bacon and Plato each represented a great class of minds, and each is valuable in the great world. In the temple of Time, which stretches over the long centuries, we seem to see Plato as one pillar, with his lit eye gazing on the empyrean; and, in the distance, Bacon, another pillar, looking earnestly upon the earth, where he discovers that fine gold, unobserved hitherto, is gleaming. Which order of mind is essentially the grander and greater of the two, it is not necessary to examine; we think, as we have said, it is that which Plato heads. At all events, Mr. Macaulay, in his philosophy, as in everything else, belongs with marked distinctness to the other.

Once more, Mr. Macaulay's theory of government is in perfect consistence with his philosophy and his religion. "We consider," these are his words, "the primary end of government as a purely temporal end, the protection of the persons and property of men." He permits governments to concern themselves with other matters, such as those of religion and education; but they are strictly subordinate. He does not endeavor to penetrate into the origin of government, he aims at no ideal perfection. To realize what I propose, he says, is practicable; to realize ideal theories, is impossible, and I have neither time nor inclination to weave cobwebs. It is interesting to contrast the views of Mr. Macaulay on this point with those of Mr. Carlyle. The latter traces it all to hero-worship. It is the right of the foolish to be governed by the wise, he exclaims, and it is the duty, often a stern one, of the wise to guide the foolish; government arose from the necessity of guidance and the power to guide. This government, if it is

that of a true-born king, must concern itself with much more than the protection of life and property; that alone is simply “anarchy *plus* a street constable.” To find your wisest is a work of difficulty, indeed; but it is one which must be done, or all is fatally out of course. Mr. Macaulay, on the other hand, utters his opinion on this point with clear, unfaltering decision, in these words:—“To say that society ought to be governed by the opinion of the wisest and best, though true, is useless. Whose opinion is to decide who are the wisest and best?” The day will come, Mr. Carlyle rejoins, if you fail utterly in finding the wisest and best, when nature will step in to your aid, and, by some world-shattering earthquake like the French Revolution, attempt an adjustment.

We shall not pronounce an unqualified opinion upon Mr. Macaulay’s views of the functions of government; but we must state, that two considerations have presented themselves to our mind which seem to cast a shadow of doubtfulness over the whole. In the first place, we can hardly imagine a government, whose aims were of no more exalted a character than those which Mr. Macaulay declares distinctively its own, gathering round it the sympathy, the loyalty, the love of mankind. Men will die for a king or a commonwealth; the name of liberty will make them fight valiantly, when the darts shut out the mid-day sun: but for a policeman men will hardly die. Surely something loftier than mere security must, either rightly or wrongly, have lent fire to the eye of patriotism, and drawn men in serried phalanx round their king; surely it were an imperfect theory of government which would deprive men of that loftier feeling and motive. In the second place, we cannot but think that government must be progressive in a nobler sense than this theory admits. It is manifest that

a skilful machinery, a system of invisible rails pervading society, is all which Mr. Macaulay's theory primarily embraces; and this might operate as well under a Montezuma as under a Cromwell—under a Jove, a Vishnu, or a Mumbo Jumbo, indifferently. But we trust that, with every advancement of humanity, government also advances; that, with every fresh burst of light which streams over the nations, it becomes more bright. We hold by the personality of governments; we think they should have a will and a voice; and then will every improvement in the general knowledge and condition of mankind be centred in them. Mr. Macaulay's theory is, we think, inadequate to the phenomena of the past, and the requirements of the future; but, as we have said, we do not mean to examine it at length, and submit that it is quite sufficient for us to exhibit that theory, and indicate its correspondence with his general mental state.

We have now finished our brief survey of those fundamental views which lie at the basis of Mr. Macaulay's system; we have found them agree in those grand features which mark them as products of one mind; we proceed to consider the mode in which he has given the system, of which they are the foundation, to the world.

Mr. Macaulay's style is by far the most popular of those which are at present devoted to the conveyance of sound instruction. He

“Has set all hearts  
To what tune pleased his ear.”

He is admired with an eager, unbounded admiration, such as used to be reserved for novelists and popular poets; and the causes of his popularity are patent. He writes in a calm, sensible manner; he startles not by any of those

apostrophic bursts which astonish and thrill us in perusing the prose of Milton and Carlyle; he calls not on the mind for sustained enthusiasm or penetrating thought: but he can lay his hand upon such rare means of adornment as he can alone command; he has culled only those flowers which grow far out of the common path, in the byways of history and poetry, and these he scatters over his pages with what we might call an elaborate carelessness and profusion. His imagination, too, is clear and, of its kind, powerful; so that in his pages everything is reflected with the vivid force of reality. The result of his knowledge, taste, and care, is a style which, for elegance, grace, and quiet force, is a rare model.

His mode of composition bears marks of the revolution wrought in his general mode of thought. When he wrote *Milton*, he was impetuous and brilliant, but he altered soon and forever. He recoiled with fierce impatience from any semblance of commonplace; his words and imagery would all be chosen with the most searching scrutiny. Concerning that vast store of imagery, the Greek mythology, we gather his decision from the following clauses uttered long after in speaking of the poetry of Frederick of Prussia:—“Here and there a manly sentiment, which deserves to be in prose, makes its appearance in company with Prometheus and Orpheus, Elysium and Acheron, the plaintive Philomel, the poppies of Morpheus, and all the other frippery which, like a robe tossed by a proud beauty to her waiting-woman, has long been contemptuously abandoned by genius to mediocrity.” In Mr. Macaulay’s writings, allusions to the Greek mythology have scarce an existence, and, though the remark is here incidental, we must say we regret the fact. If the old religion of Greece was a personification of natural powers; if, above all, it was the most perfect

embodiment, in ideal forms, of ideal beauty, that ever was produced by the mind of man, its beauty is perennial and inexhaustible. And such it surely was. We count the Greek mythology as true and strict a product of nature as the silky leaves of the birch, or the rosy clouds of the morning; and, after a million of poetasters have done their worst, the petals of the roses will be undimmed in beauty, and untainted in fragrance, when they once more bind the brow of the Spring whose footsteps we are just beginning to hear. In the works of Carlyle, the Greek mythology is used with a power and splendor which dazzle and delight as effectively as if the whole had been discovered, in some ancient tomb, last year. Need we remind Mr. Macaulay that the song of the lark was, according to Mr. Rogers, old in the time of Homer? Would it not be hard to have forbidden all subsequent poets from listening in rapture to its morning carol, or endeavoring to catch a few of its notes? It is the prerogative of genius to shed a new light over every form of beauty, as the sun every morning sheds a light, old and yet ever new, over the lakes, and flowers, and mountains, arraying them in a beauty that is ever fresh.

But Mr. Macaulay, we say, would have imagery which no other could show; he would set out—to use his own words, which strikingly illustrate our remarks—only “an entertainment worthy of a Roman epicure; an entertainment consisting of nothing but delicacies—the brains of singing-birds, the roe of mullets, the sunny halves of peaches.” His sentences are irresistibly fascinating from the succession they present of new and interesting facts, instructing while they illustrate, and amusing while they instruct. He is totally destitute of pretension; he “rolls no raptures;” he treads calmly along in the confidence

that he has a strength of which word-mongers know nothing. His pictures float past the reader, like the cumulous clouds on a summer's day, clear, swiftly flying, and touched with the loveliest hues; or like the meadows, gardens, and lakes, which glide past, when you sit in an open carriage, going at an easy pace, through a beautiful land, in a crystal atmosphere. The following pair of sketches are done with the minuteness of Teniers, but with a warm glow of color which Teniers could not command:—“The correctness which the last century prized so much resembles the correctness of those pictures of the Garden of Eden which we see in old Bibles. We have an exact square, enclosed by the rivers Pison, Gihon, Hiddekel, and Euphrates, each with a convenient bridge in the centre, rectangular beds of flowers, a long canal, neatly bricked and railed in, the tree of knowledge, clipped like one of the limes behind the Tuilleries, standing in the centre of the grand alley, the snake twined round it, the man on the right hand, the woman on the left, and the beasts drawn up in an exact circle round them. In one sense the picture is correct enough. That is to say, the squares are correct, the circles are correct, the man and the woman are in a most correct line with the tree, and the snake forms a most correct spiral.

“But if there were a painter so gifted that he could place on the canvas that glorious paradise, seen by the interior eye of him whose outward sight had failed with long watching and laboring for liberty and truth, if there were a painter who could set before us the mazes of the sapphire brook, the lake with its fringe of myrtles, the flowery meadows, the grottoes overhung by vines, the forests shining with Hesperian fruit, and with the plumage of gorgeous birds, the massy shade of that nuptial bower which showered down roses on the sleeping lovers, what

should we think of a connoisseur who should tell us that this painting, though finer than the absurd picture in the old Bible, was not so correct?"

Consider this other picture, too; it is that of young Maria Theresa, when the troubles of war were beginning to darken round her imperial brow:—" Yet was the spirit of the haughty daughter of the Cæsars unbroken. Hungary was still hers by an unquestionable title; and although her ancestors had found Hungary the most muntinous of all their kingdoms, she resolved to trust herself to the fidelity of a people, rude, indeed, turbulent, and impatient of oppression, but brave, generous, and simple-hearted. In the midst of distress and peril, she had given birth to a son, afterwards the Emperor Joseph II. Scarcely had she risen from her couch, when she hastened to Presburg. There, in the sight of an innumerable multitude, she was crowned with the crown, and robed with the robe of St. Stephen. No spectator could restrain his tears when the beautiful young mother, still weak from child-bearing, rode, after the fashion of her fathers, up the Mount of Defiance, unsheathed the ancient sword of state, shook it towards north and south, east and west, and, with a glow on her pale face, challenged the four corners of the world to dispute her rights and those of her boy. At the first sitting of the Diet, she appeared clad in deep mourning for her father; and, in pathetic and dignified words, implored her people to support her just cause. Magnates and deputies sprang up, half drew their sabres, and with eager voices vowed to stand by her with their lives and fortunes. Till then her firmness had never once forsaken her before the public eye: but at that shout she sank down upon her throne, and wept aloud. Still more touching was the sight when, a few days later, she came again before the Estates of her realm, and

held up the little archduke in her arms. Then it was that the enthusiasm of Hungary broke forth into that war-cry which soon resounded through Europe, ‘Let us die for our king, Maria Theresa!’” There is a silent, unostentatious power here which is irresistible ; the grand fact stands grandly forth, in its simple majesty, like a Greek statue, where not one superfluous fold of drapery encumbers the silent loveliness ; there is not a word that could be spared, and yet there is not a word too few. It is upon such pictures that the distinctive English reader loves to gaze ; there are no sentimental raptures to dim its transparent clearness, there is no trifling prettiness unworthy of its greatness, there is no affectation ; all is manly, simple, beautiful.

At times, too, Mr. Macaulay can indulge in a quiet but hearty laugh ; and exactly such a laugh as every Englishman can join with him in enjoying. Of the translations of Homer by Pope and Tickell he thus speaks :—“Addison, and Addison’s devoted followers, pronounced both the versions good, but maintained that Tickell’s had more of the original. The town gave a decided preference to Pope’s. We do not think it worth while to settle such a question of precedence. Neither of the rivals can be said to have translated the Iliad, unless, indeed, the word translation be used in the sense which it bears in the Midsummer Night’s Dream. When Bottom makes his appearance with an ass’s head instead of his own, Peter Quince exclaims, ‘Bless thee ! Bottom, bless thee ! thou art translated.’ In this sense, undoubtedly, the readers of either Pope or Tickell may very properly exclaim, ‘Bless thee ! Homer ; thou art translated indeed.’”

Of Mr. Macaulay’s style we cannot say, as he says of the eloquence of Fox, that it is penetrated and made red-hot with passion ; it is not a turbid, heavy-rolling stream, which

at intervals dashes itself into spray, and thunders foaming over lofty precipices, where the gazer trembles at the stupendous height, while his eye is dazzled by the gorgeous rainbows that wreathes it, a description which would apply to the style of Richter or Carlyle; its flow is even and smooth, or ruffled only by the mildest summer breeze. It is an honest style; and this is a matter of importance. There is no lashing of his sides to raise himself into fury; there is no outflow of tears; all is clear as an English fountain, beautiful as an English woodland, abounding in such picturesque, unpretentious attractions as an Englishman loves. We may differ from Mr. Macaulay in his general modes of thinking; we may hold that he seldom or never rises into the highest regions of descriptive or didactic composition; but, for point, purity, clearness, and elegance, we repeat, his style is a rare model, and will ever continue to be esteemed such.

We have been very much astonished, indeed, to meet with a severe attack upon Mr. Macaulay as an orator; we think in no character is he more true to himself. He is not a passionate, fiery soul; it were affectation to assume the oratorical language or gestures of such. His eloquence is calm, clear, unimpassioned, the placid deliverance of a placid mind. Rich in historic adornment, fascinating from the flowing continuity of the sentences, and never exchanging the plain garb of common sense for the tawdry drapery of nonsense, it trims between dulness and passionate fire, between transcendental nonsense and transcendental truth. We had the pleasure of hearing him address his constituents in Edinburgh a few months since; and a more perfect correspondence between his oratory, his works, and his whole character, than that which was discernible on that occasion, we cannot conceive.

It were unpardonable to omit mention of Mr. Macaulay's poetic efforts; but, as these have been ere now noticed at some length in our pages, and as our space is well-nigh exhausted, we shall be extremely brief. Mr. Macaulay, of course, never thought of claiming the title of poet; his mind is of a class essentially different from the poetic. But all the beauties of his prose find their consummation in his stanzas; the skill in grouping, the vivid painting, the picturesque arrangement of facts, the mellifluous harmony of names. His *Lays of Rome* remind us of the fervor of his *Milton*; and with extreme admiration there is blended a shade of regret. They have been praised in all quarters, and never a word too much: in their way, we can scarcely conceive anything finer. They are full of that sort of enthusiasm which inspires delight; we are never moved to agony, we are never raised to rapture, and we never imagine that the writer was deeply stirred in their composition; but we are in the midst of the scene, we see the army of the Tuscans as distinctly as Horatius saw it, and we share the emotions of the bystanders in their pride and valor without their terror. In his verses Mr. Macaulay gives himself the rein; he curbs not his enthusiasm, he restrains not his fire: in his prose, he seems to write under the eye of some cold censor, the personification of English common sense, who rigidly damps every ardor, and dims every gleam of passion. His Lays indicate what his prose might have been, had he retained the style of *Milton*: they are, as we have said, the concentration, with an additional flash of fire, of his beauties in prose.

Mr. Macaulay's external history, as gleaned from one or two contemporary authorities, is soon told. He became a member of the House of Commons in 1831; he allied himself to the advocates of the Reform Bill, and has continued

a consistent liberal. About the year 1833, he became connected with Indian affairs, and was for several years member of the Supreme Council of Calcutta. In 1839, he became secretary of war under Lord Melbourne, and went into opposition when Sir Robert Peel became prime minister. In 1846, he was rejected by the electors of Edinburgh; he retired into a dignified privacy, ennobled by studies of national importance; he became the most popular of English historians; and, in 1852, he was again victoriously returned for Edinburgh.

There are three men who may be said to bear rule at present in the kingdom of British literature: their doctrines are repeated, their style is echoed, in all magazines; their conjoined or antagonistic influence will be powerful in moulding the thoughts of several generations to come: they are Alison, Macaulay, and Carlyle. The man who would form an approximately correct idea of his time must know all the three. Alison must be had recourse to for a general view of the time and its events. He is of wide rather than keen vision, of fervid rather than piercing utterance; he turns the gaze of men upon the institutions which have been the growth of ages, and, in a revolutionary age, he calls upon men to preserve what is true, and beware how they unfix those pillars that have so long sustained the political system. His works are immense magazines of facts, and of facts which every thinking man will, in the present day, earnestly ponder. Macaulay, fervid and earnest in youth, seemed to be unsheathing a sword of flame; but he suddenly grew calm, and the blade which, after careful polishing, he ultimately displayed, was cold as the brand Excalibur, with the moonbeams playing over it in the frosty night, but invisibly sharp. In him is no intensity; he never awakens the profoundest tears or the

deepest laughter; the fearful questions concerning God, Freedom, Immortality, at which the most thoughtful and the most noble of the sons of men have stood aghast, he simply bids away; his writings are a stream in which you may see gold grains gleam, but of which you can always see to the bottom. He is a literary impersonation of the middle class of Englishmen. Carlyle stands in a category by himself; where the others are admired, he is, so to speak, worshipped. The other two concern themselves with institutions and laws, the embodied wisdom of many. Carlyle looks to men. Had you formulas sufficient to thatch the world, he exclaims, they would not stead you; you must have the lit eye that can see, the stout arm that can do, or all is lost. He penetrates into "the abysmal deeps of personality;" he cares not so much to register facts, as to pierce into their producing principles and causes. In every direction he seeks to penetrate as far as the human intellect can go, and then, like Plato, gazes earnestly towards the infinite. His style is varied, broken and startling: in his best day it was clear as an Italian morning, and extremely beautiful; in after times, though occasionally degenerating into comparative inferiority, it at intervals rose into passages of surpassing grandeur. He has cast his eye over history with a glance whose sympathy was kindled by what had been unseen or unheeded by other men; wherever tremendous force was allied with nobleness and truth, he has recognized with rapture the union, and sympathetically traced its workings. He has broken up old modes of thought and old modes of composition; he has been studied with an earnestness, and loved with a devotion, which no other writer of the day can claim; he has been imitated by a class of writers, whose unapproachable parody could never have been produced, save unconsciously; he has spoken

more sense, and given rise to more nonsense, than any literary man of the day. It may be granted to "the little kingdom" to feel a kind of pride that two of these distinguished men are her own, and the third hers by extraction.

There is an argument having some appearance of subtlety and force, often urged against Macaulay, to which it may be proper briefly to refer. It is alleged that his mind is of that order, which dwells most congenially in the region of the abstract; that he can scientifically estimate, rather than act; that he loves events, rather than men. He is, thus runs the approved phraseology, essentially a mechanical man, not a dynamical. In one form or other, this theory often appears. One man, red hot from Carlyle's French Revolution, remarks sniffingly that Macaulay is an English Girondin. Another recites the story of Gibbon, who sat looking upon Pitt and Fox in passionate conflict, in precisely the same mood, with precisely the same kind and degree of interest, as warmed his philosophic bosom when he contemplated, through the long, passionless perspective of ages, the Trajans and Tamerlanes of his Decline and Fall. Gibbon and Macaulay are then involved in a common condemnation. The general argument has been expounded with great elaboration, and a certain felicitous piquancy difficult to resist, in one of the ablest of our Reviews.\* But both the reviewer in this case, and, as it appears to us, those in general who indulge in the habit of depreciating, on such grounds, our great essayist and historian, omit the consideration of one preliminary question, of vital importance in the discussion. Is not the composition of great literary works itself action, nay, action of as august and important a nature as any strictly practical operation; and if it is, and if, in its highest perfection, it admits not of combination with more ordinary exertion, is it not in all

\* The National. The essay has since been republished along with others by the same author, Mr Bagshot.

senses right and noble in a man, so far to sequester himself from practical life, as to give his powers full scope and fair play for the higher achievement? Was the presence of mind of a Pitt or Fox, was their practical tact or parliamentary skill, was all that they did for us, or left to us, so much greater than that calm breadth of historical vision, which gazed over wide spaces of time, harmonizing the diverse, uniting the remote, seeing all with new clearness, and at last giving to the world a literary masterpiece, which, with all its faults, is imperishable as civilization? It has been remarked that Napoleon possessed powers which would, so directed, have secured him immortal fame as an author. No hypothetic fact seems to us more certain. But as an author, he will never be thought of; both in theory and practice, both in taste and style, he was a bad writer. Pure intellectual action, and mixed intellectual action, were incompatible. But would it have been less great and manly in Napoleon to have devoted himself to pure thought, to such work as that of the Aristotles, Newtons, Goethes, if it had been so ordered by Providence that no diadem should cast its maddening gleam into his eyes, luring him to empire and despair? It matters little to our argument in what way this question is answered: but it is plain that an answer must be given it, before a man can be adjudged of an inferior order, moral and intellectual, for having preserved himself so far from the distracting influences of life, as to permit his mind to work in an intellectual region, serene because it is lofty. For our own part, we scruple not to avow our belief that it may be a man's highest duty and noblest course thus to seclude himself. Consider the matter fairly even for one moment, and it will be found, that all the great writers of mankind, poets, philosophers, historians, men of science, have in one way or other pursued that

abstract method of contemplating truths and events, which is objected to Gibbon and Macaulay. They all afford illustration of the fact that there is an antithesis between thought and action, between literary exertion and life. The one is broad, calm, and proportionately slow; its slowness renders it so far unfit for the momentary emergencies of practical endeavor: the other is fragmentary, collected into instantaneous flashes, swift as the lightning and proportionately agitated; and this agitation is totally incompatible with the highest intellectual achievement. It was certainly sublime in Milton to postpone the composition of *Paradise Lost* at the voice of his country; but the postponement, with the reason assigned, remains an incontestible proof of the necessity of calm to high intellectual exertion; and we can safely pledge ourselves to admit ignoble weakness in any case, where it can be shown that practical assistance was withheld, in a crisis so momentous as that which led Milton from the still slopes of the Aonian hill to join the battling squadrons in the plain. But the truth is, Mr. Macaulay can hardly be said in any sense to need defence. He has shrunk from no public duty. He has entered with ardor into the political discussions of his time. It seems universally admitted that his administration in India was sagacious and admirable. He preserved only such intellectual calm as was absolutely necessary in obedience to the highest hests of his genius. And when he has given us consummate works, we gracefully and gratefully blame him for not having given them in an impossible manner!

What has Macaulay done to deserve the thanks of his country? He has done much. He has thrown over large portions of her history the light of a most powerful fascination: he has maintained the purity of the English language in a time when it is in danger; he has never stooped

for a moment to the ignoble or the low, either in sentiment or style. Of the structure which he has reared, and which is to be his monument to the generations to come, we have been unable to present a finished or complete delineation; we have been unable even to glance at its several portions in detail; but we pronounce it a consistent and stately structure, and shall deem ourselves happy if we have, with any fair measure of success, laid bare its foundations, and exhibited, so to speak, the statical laws on which it has been built. While Britain lasts, English history will be better known than heretofore; for, while Britain lasts, Macaulay's *Essays* and Macaulay's *History of England* will be read. Lastly, he has furnished to cultivated minds a source of pure and exquisite pleasure; and, in dropping our pen after this summary, we experience a feeling akin to dread, that we have said anything unworthy of one to whom we are indebted for so much knowledge, so much instruction, and so many hours of refined and manly enjoyment.

### III.

#### SIR ARCHIBALD ALISON.

THE present is very prominently a criticizing age. From the quarterly review, whose writer aims at immortal renown, to the daily newspaper, whose writer aims at saying what will please readers, and gain him the reputation of being a smart and spirited young man, every sort of periodical is more or less critical. And yet it may be questioned, whether the facility of forming a correct, adequate estimate of any marked writer, is, in a material degree, furthered by this vast amount of reviewing. The very facility of having an opinion increases the difficulty of having a correct one. Each reviewer professes impartiality; many honestly endeavor to be fair. But it cannot be doubted that many, whatever their professions, are really and consciously influenced by motives of party or interest; that many more, striving honestly to divest themselves of all such considerations, are yet, unconsciously but fatally, moved thereby; while the utter inability to take the correct measure of a distinguished man, by no means necessarily precludes self-satisfied dogmatism in pronouncing an opinion concerning him. Thus arise innumerable errors; and, in each instance of error, the great speaking-trumpet called public opinion (which, almost as much as any other trumpet, utters sounds that are produced by another), is

made to give forth uncertain or discordant sounds. Hence it is, that certain literary maxims or cries, analogous to certain watchwords in the political world, become bruited about in society respecting known authors; originating with political opponents, or struck off, more for the sake of their smartness than their truth, by some clever litterateur; and always, in part at least, erroneous. The influence such cries exert is incalculable. They seem so smart, they are so easily retailed, and they so pleasantly save all trouble. Equipped in this manner, every spruce scion of the nobility, whose intellectual furniture consists mainly of certain long-deceased conservative maxims, can pronounce decisively that the great whig essayist and historian, Macaulay, is "a book in breeches;" while every new-fledged politician, who steps along in the march of intellect, panoplied in ignorance and conceit, feels himself of quite sufficient ability and importance, to sneer at the king of literary conservatives, Sir Archibald Alison, and sublimely remark that his writings are the "reverse of genius."

In endeavoring to attain a correct opinion respecting any celebrated contemporary, almost all such prepossession must be resolutely and conscientiously laid aside. We say almost, because every cry will be found to contain one small grain of truth, and, while fatal if taken as keynote, to be valuable as a subordinate contribution. With as thorough impartiality as is attainable by any effort of the will, in full sight of encompassing dangers, the author must be studied, must be communed with, as it were, face to face, through the works he has given to his fellow-men; and as great a sympathy as is possible must be attained with him in his views and objects. The grand principle also must never be lost sight of, that God makes nothing in vain; that the moral world is as varied, as vast, and as

complex as the physical; and that it is only when, coming out of the little dwelling of our own ideas and maxims, we gaze over the thousandfold developments of mind, that we perceive the harmonious grandeur of the whole. In all cases, narrow intensity marks imperfection. The worker of limited power excels in some one particular: the private soldier knows when to put his right foot foremost, and when to draw his trigger; the commissariat officer knows how to arrange the provisioning of a division; the Murat or Lambert can command a body of cavalry, and bring it down with overpowering vigor upon an enemy; but it is only the Napoleon or the Cromwell that can do all in his single person, and so prove himself born to command. The same holds good of writers. The narrow, limited author has one particular idea, by which he thinks he has taken the measure of the universe; he sympathizes with one sort of excellence, he has one formula in politics, he has one dogma in religion; while the king in literature—the Richter, the Goethe, the Shakspeare—displays a countless variety of excellences, sympathizes with every sound human faculty, and at last almost attains the serene and all-embracing tolerance of “contradicting no one.” These men can take a comprehensive view of nature in all her forms and all her workings; they know well that, when the magnificent island exalts its head in the ocean, not the smallest insect that formed it has died in vain.

It is with the earnest desire to attain as close an approximation as possible, to the impartiality and width of view and sympathy we have indicated, that we approach the literary measurement of Sir Archibald Alison. Our position, purely literary, precludes political bias; and, though not subscribing to every article of his political creed, we hope to do him some measure of justice.

The fundamental stratum on which Sir Archibald Alison's character, with all its feelings and faculties, is based, is that which is in all cases indispensable, but which in many instances has been wanting. That basis is thorough, fervent, well-applied honesty. He is a man who believes with the whole power of his soul. He is not cold and formal as Robertson; he is not tainted in his whole nature, as was Gibbon, by mistaking a sinewless phantom, called "philosophy"—evoked, like some Frankenstein, from vacancy, by the literary necromancy of French savans — for an embodiment of celestial truth: friends and foes alike respect the genuine fervor, linked with earth and with heaven, which pervades and animates the writings of Sir Archibald Alison. This it is which must, we think, make his works essentially pleasing to every honest man. In one place, we may question an inference ; in another, we may detect an imperfect analogy ; here we may smile at the identification of the advocates of organic reform (revolution) with the powers of hell ; and there we may think the laws of chaste and correct imagery infringed ; but we always feel that the company of this man is safe—that his breast holds no malice or guile—that he believes really, and believes in a reality. Such is the base of Sir Archibald's character —a basis of adamant.

With this comports well the general tone of his mind. He is always animated ; he is always energetic. But here a distinction must be made. Sir Archibald is not one of those men whom a class of modern writers would specially characterize as "earnest." We cannot discover that he has undergone any of those fierce internal struggles which figure so largely in modern literature, and which give such a wild and thrilling interest to certain writings of Byron, Goethe, and Carlyle. He seems never to have wrestled in

life-and death struggle with doubt ; he seems to have early discerned, with perfect assurance, the great pillars of human belief, and calmly placed his back against them ; his mind is essentially opposed to the skeptical order of intellect. Hence it is that his beliefs, though honest and unwavering, are not intense ; that he throws all his energy out upon objective realities ; that we have no syllable as to the author's subjective state. We believe that the two latter writers, whom we have referred to as entering largely upon subjective delineation, would declare this to be the more healthy mental state of the two ; it is that, indeed, towards which all their efforts tend. We see as little of Sir Archibald Alison when he discusses any question, as we do of Homer when he narrates. But this order of mind may be characterized by various degrees of intellectual power ; and, as a general fact, its beliefs will not be held with such intensity as in the other case. When one grasps a precious casket from his burning dwelling, he grasps it more tenaciously, and proclaims his triumph with more intense exultation, than if he had never doubted for a moment his safe possession of it.

Sir Archibald's beliefs, then, are not intense ; we must add, that his energy is not concentrated. The stronger the spirit distilled from any substance, the smaller the quantity ; a small cannon will do as much as a huge battering-ram. We are often reminded of the fact in perusing the works of Sir Archibald Alison. In one point of view, his energy may be wondered at, and in some measure commended ; in another point of view, it must be pronounced defective, and almost to be regretted. That readers may obtain an idea of his powers of working — of the amount which he can perform — we extract the following from a very able article upon Sir Archibald, which ap-

peared, some years since, in the *Dublin University Magazine*:—

“Like all men who have durably left a name in the annals of serious literature, Mr. Alison has immense powers of application. The mere reading he has gone through, exclusive of study and note-taking, appears to an ordinary person incredible. Two thousand volumes, and two-thirds of these in a foreign language, were the basis upon which he reared his great history; and the information on other subjects which he exhibits in his miscellaneous writings is not less extraordinary. Politics and history, novels and poetry, the drama and the arts, alike engage his attention. Every masterpiece of antiquity has been scanned by him; every remarkable Continental work undergoes his scrutiny. The literature of the day, the newspaper press of France and England, of America and the colonies, are ready to illustrate or corroborate his statements; and, in his hands, trade circulars, blue-books, and parliamentary returns, become eloquent from the truths they unfold.” To this more may be added. Sir Archibald has all along performed the duties of “a judicial office of greater labor and responsibility than any other in Scotland.” His collected essays form three large volumes; his great historical work fills twenty considerable volumes; and he has just published the first volume of a new history, containing about six hundred octavo pages. Besides all this, he has published four other works, two of them of great size. That this displays an amazing power of working, no one can deny; but we think the further position must be allowed, that, however we may praise the honest application which it involves, it is to be regretted that it was not condensed, and dealt out more circumspectly. We speak not of the history; we direct our attention to the essays. It must be taken as, in

one point of view, quite a satisfactory account of every defect in these able and fascinating performances, that they were written in such haste that revision was impossible; under the circumstances, they could not reasonably have been expected to be better. But our very admiration of the essays, and our profound conviction of the value of the thought they contain, sharpen our regret that haste should have deprived them of any polish or vigor—that in any instance it should be suspected by the reader that the plough is going over the top of the ground, and not into it. It may be said, that these essays were written at particular junctures, when it was important, for national reasons, that they should instantly appear. We acknowledge the force of this; it is perfectly sufficient to excuse every defect which marred the essays as they were issued in the pages of the magazine; but did not their collection in a form adapted to separate publication afford an opportunity for revision and condensation? Is any one more fully aware than Sir Archibald of the value of thought? that one grain of its imperishable gold outweighs whole reams of printed paper? And can any one forget the fact, that men often judge by a slip, or a deficiency, or an imperfection, and obstinately refuse to believe in excellence which is not uniform? We again profess an extreme admiration for many of the essays of which we speak; and we must avow that no feeling more powerfully affected our mind, as we perused them, than a desire that their author had, with the utmost deliberation and earnestness, applied himself to exhibit, in clear separate form, certain of those views and principles to which he rightly attaches so much importance, and which he has so thoroughly mastered. As we read such essays as those on the *Indian Question*—on which, in all its aspects, Sir Archibald is admirable—as

we discerned great, and true, and important principles slightly obscured, and rendered uncertain of effect, by being connected with certain political crises, and made the basis of certain predictions which could be but partly true, we felt the deepest regret. It seemed anomalous too, that discussions of high ability should occur in a volume containing such imperfect and temporary productions as the essays on Napoleon and Mirabeau. One Damascus sabre, whose edge is invisible from sharpness, is worth many ill-tempered blades, clumsy in use, and obscured here and there by rust; we wish Sir Archibald had devoted more attention to tempering and sharpening, and comparatively little to indefinite multiplication.

His indefatigable industry has enabled Sir Archibald Alison to accumulate very extensive stores of knowledge; by continual practice in composition, he has them ever at hand; and he infuses life into all by the sustained animation and fervor of his mind. His judgment, although it cannot be defined as penetrative, or adapted to distinguish very minute shades of thought, is yet of extreme value in those cases where great national characteristics are to be discerned; it is unbiassed either by sentimentality or coldness of heart; and, although it sometimes is led astray by too prevailing a dread of anything like democracy, its decisions, as embodying one important aspect of human affairs, are always deserving of serious attention and deference. In his early days, Sir Archibald was "an enthusiastic mathematician, obtained the highest prizes in these studies in the University of Edinburgh, and has often lain awake solving problems in conic sections and fluxions in the dark, with the diagram painted in his mind." This early proficiency in mathematics has characterized very many distinguished men: Milton, Napoleon, Chalmers, Carlyle — men surely

of dissimilar, but all of great genius. We doubt not that this mathematical study has availed Sir Archibald much, in enabling him to glance over multiplex national and social phenomena, and discern the one truth which connected them all, and which lent them their signification.

Sir Archibald's sympathies are wide, and give rise at once to versatility of talent, and fairness to opponents. He is certainly Conservative; he is an uncompromising, unquestioning Tory. But we think it must be allowed that he treats his opponents generously; that here the only conservatism which attaches to him is that of honor and of chivalry. He would as much scorn to search out, with malignant scrutiny, the pardonable weakness or foible of an opponent, as the true knight of the olden time would have scorned to point his lance just at the spot where he thought the armor of his foe was cracked. He concerns himself with principles; if he overcomes his antagonist, it is by utterly smashing the arms of his trust by the force of historic truth; he disdains to take his foe at a disadvantage, but he neither asks nor gives quarter.

It is somewhat astonishing to find the same enthusiastic, rolling utterance in his critical as in his political essays; we presume in one case it is the enthusiasm of belief—he feels he is talking to his countrymen and to posterity on matters of vital importance, and he speaks fervently and loud: in the other, we take it to be the enthusiasm of delight; “we have done,” he seems to say, “for a time, with the doctrines of currency; we shall let the Manchester school alone, there being room enough in the world for it and us; let us away to hear the ringing of the squadrons around Troy, to weep or sadly smile with Dante, to see celestial softness in the creations of Raphael, or to tremble at the wild passion of Michael Angelo.” And in criticism,

the same mental characteristics are manifested as elsewhere. He does not, by natural bent, turn all his powers to penetrate into radical laws of beauty or taste. In examining a work of art, he sees great characteristics; he does not remark the particular waving of a curl, he does not measure every angle, he does not refine about rhythm or euphony, but he sees the eye of Homer glancing into the heart of man, and he follows the hand of Angelo as it strikes out the big bones and muscles. In all cases, he is wide and fervid, not piercing, lynx-eyed and intense.

In opinion, Sir Archibald Alison, we have remarked, is Conservative; this is the foundation of all his system of thought. And we must profess our profound conviction, however much on particular topics we might venture to join issue with Sir Archibald, both that his conservatism is a most honest and venerable conservatism, and that it is of incalculable importance and value to true progress. His conservatism is one whose object is liberty, and whose watchword is progress. We, of course, cannot condescend upon particular views entertained by him on particular subjects; but, leaving the vexed questions of currency, we think his system may all be shown to branch out from two great stems:—

1st, Universality of representation.

2nd, National honor.

By the first of these, which is an expression of our own, we by no means intend to represent Sir Archibald as an advocate of universal suffrage; we design it to mean the accordance to every interest in the state of its due representation and influence. Let the aristocracy, he says, be represented, for then you have continually gathered round the national standard those who are bound to defend it by every obligation of honor, descent, and interest: who have

inherited education, by birth, who have unlimited leisure by the possession of wealth, and who are raised by position above the excessive influence of popular clamors. Let the middle classes be represented, that the interests of commerce be not overlooked, and that the interests of the farmer be not merged in those of the landlord. Let every one who has proved himself of sufficient industry, honesty and intelligence to rise from the working-classes, and who has a stake in the national welfare, have a vote. But by no means extend the right of voting to all numerically, for then you have destroyed all radical uniformity; you have committed a suicidal act; you have put the sceptre into the hand of that which is so vastly the most numerous body in the state—the populace. Their representation in the other case will be indirect but real. Sir Archibald strongly advocates the extension or continuance of representative rights to the colonies of a mother state.

From the second great branch of Sir Archibald's system, the upholding, at all hazards, of national honor, proceeds his unqualified protest against utilitarianism as the basis of a system of policy; his untiring and eloquent advocacy of colonial interest; his utter disdain of the political creed whose formula is *L. s. d.* National honor, national justice, national religion, national unity—these are his watchwords. And here, again, his views are wide and practical, rather than penetrating or ideal. He takes his stand upon those virtues which characterize a nation as distinguished from an individual—moderation, calmness, general purity of manners. He trusts for the attainment of these to a national church, and has, therefore, an unmasked distrust and dislike of dissent. The renovation of the nation from an individual starting-point, he regards as chimerical; he looks to national religious institutions, and not to men; for the

attainment of national virtue, he must have a national church. And here it is that the outline of his system is most liable to objection. "The contest," he says, "between revolution and conservatism is no other than the contest between the powers of hell and those of heaven. Human pride, adopting the suggestions of the great adversary of mankind, will always seek a remedy for social evils in the spread of earthly knowledge, the change of institutions, the extension of science, and the unaided efforts of worldly wisdom. Religion, following a heavenly guide, will never cease to foretell the entire futility of all such means to eradicate the seeds of evil from humanity, and will loudly proclaim that the only reform that is really likely to be efficacious, either in this world or the next, is the reform of the human heart. . . . Conservative government, as distinguished from despotism, has never yet been re-established in France; and religion has never regained its sway over the influential classes of society. . . . But religion, be it ever recollect, does not consist merely in abstract theological tenets. Active exertion, strenuous charity, unceasing efforts to spread its blessings among the poor, constitute its essential and most important part. It is by following out these precepts, and making a universal *national provision* for the great objects of *religious instruction, general education, and the relief of suffering*, that religion is to take its place as the great director and guide of nations, as it has ever been the only means of salvation to individuals." However true this may be, it surely is not the whole truth; it ignores the fact that dissent may spring from religious earnestness, as well as from scientific skepticism. Such *religion* as any effort of conservatism could enable to "regain its sway over the influential classes of society," would be pronounced by most earnestly relig-

ious men a misnomer. It might be called “respectability,” and so shown to be invaluable to a government; if named religion, rigorous limitations would be made. We shall not enter upon this complicated and difficult question; but we take the truth in the matter to be this:—Sound dissent is invariably based upon individual earnestness; so it was with the Waldenses, so with the Puritans, so with the Wesleyans; and it were the perfection of government, when this individual religious earnestness was permitted to diffuse itself harmoniously through the commonwealth, neither arrayed in hostility nor monopolizing regard. Sir Archibald Alison, looking entirely from a national point of view, has, we must think, failed to perceive the value, the power, nay, even the safety, of individual earnest religion in a nation: he sees not that, in the fervor of dissent, there can ever glow the true light from heaven; the iron, the brass, and the clay of false systems cannot, he thinks, be broken, unless the stone is most carefully cut and shaped by the hands of government. The secretary of limited vision, on the other hand, looking entirely from an individual point of view, ignores the vitally important distinction between the individual and national life. In both cases there is error, for in both cases there is narrowness of view: the aim of every government should be to ally to itself by the ties of loyalty every interest in the state, to steady itself by a thousand different anchors.

We deem Sir Archibald Alison’s conservatism a truly noble conservatism; based on honesty, patriotism, and extensive knowledge; embracing one great department of truth, which has in all ages to be re-proclaimed. And, in the present age, we think it peculiarly useful. When Socialism, Communism, Chartism, and the rest, are perambulating the world, like so many resuscitations of Guy Fawkes,

each with a lighted brand, purporting to have been kindled by reason and truth, and to be able to shed a paradisiacal light over nations, and yet too evidently threatening to fire the world with a very different kind of illumination, such a conservatism takes the link from the red hand, and compels the ruffian to pause, to consider, and gradually to regain his right mind. The best human system is not all truth—the worst is not all error; but the friend of advancement has little faith in his cause, if he goes out of his way to denounce conservatism.

In addressing ourselves to make a few remarks more particularly on Sir Archibald Alison, as historian and essayist, it is scarce necessary for us to premise that we must be concise and fragmentary. The work by which he is best known, and which has attained a world-wide reputation, is his *History of Europe during the French Revolution*. The origin of that great work, and the preparation for it undergone by its author, are eloquently discoursed of by the writer whom we have already quoted; his words are so beautiful, and his authority so reliable, that we are glad to enrich our columns by their insertion. “Many illustrious men have neglected their genius in youth—many more do not become aware of possessing it till that fleeting seed-time of future glory is past forever.” “Amid my vast and lofty aspirations,” says Lamartine, “the penalty of a wasted youth overtook me. Adieu, then, to the dreams of genius, to the aspirations of intellectual enjoyment!” Many a gifted heart has sighed the same sad sigh; many a noble nature has walked to his grave in sackcloth, for one brief dallying in the bowers of Circe, for one short sleep in the Castle of Indolence. But no such echo of regret can check the aspirations of our author. Brought up at the feet of Gamaliel in all that relates to lofty religious feeling and

the admiration of art, and in not a little concerning the grand questions of national politics, his youth was well tended; and almost ere he emerged from that golden, dreamy period, he had embarked on the undertaking which was to be the mission of his life, and his passport to immortal fame. Among the dazzling and dazzled crowds whom, from all parts of Europe, the fall of Napoleon in 1814 attracted to the French metropolis, was a young Englishman, who, hurrying from his paternal roof, arrived in time to witness the magnificent pageants which rendered memorable the residence of the allied sovereigns and armies in Paris. Napoleon had fallen, the last act of the revolutionary drama seemed to have closed; and in the Place Louis XV., assembled Europe and repentant France joined in the obsequies of its earliest victims and holiest martyrs. It was in the midst of those heart-stirring scenes that the first inspiration of writing a history of the momentous period, then seemingly closed, entered the throbbing heart of that English youth—and that youth was Alison. Ten years of travel, meditation, and research followed, during which the eye and the ear alike gathered materials for his great undertaking, and the mind was expanding its gifted powers preparatory to moulding these materials in a form worthy of the great events to be narrated, and of the high conceptions which the youth longed to realize. Other fifteen years of composition were required ere the history was brought to a close, and the noble genius of its author awakened the admiration of Europe."

The standard of historic excellence by which Sir Archibald has been regulated, we are able to determine from his own works; we cannot do better than quote the following:—"Passion and reason in equal proportions, it has been observed, form energy. With equal truth, and for a similar

reason, it may be said, that intellect and imagination, in equal proportions, form history. It is the want of the last quality which is in general fatal to the persons who adventure upon that great but difficult branch of composition. It in every age sends ninety-nine hundredths of historical works down the gulf of time. Industry and accuracy are so evidently and indisputably requisite in the outset of historical composition, that men forget that genius and taste are required for its completion. They see that the edifice must be reared of blocks cut out of the quarry; and they fix their attention on the quarriers who loosen them from the rock, without considering that the soul of Phidias or Michael Angelo is required to arrange them in the due proportion in the immortal structure. What makes great and durable works of history so rare is, that they alone, perhaps, of any other production, require for their formation a combination of the most opposite qualities of the human mind — qualities which are found united only in a very few individuals in any age. Industry and genius, passion and perseverance, enthusiasm and caution, vehemence and prudence, ardor and self-control, the fire of poetry, the coldness of prose, the eye of painting, the patience of calculation, dramatic power, philosophic thought — are all called for in the annalist of human events. Mr. Fox had a clear perception of what history should be, when he placed it *next to poetry in the fine arts, and before oratory*. Eloquence is but a fragment of what is enfolded in its mighty arms. Military genius ministers only to its more brilliant scenes. Mere ardor or poetic imagination will prove wholly insufficient; they will be deterred at the very threshold of the undertaking by the toil with which it is attended, and turn aside into the more inviting paths of poetry and romance. The labor of writing the *Life of*

*Napoleon* shortened the days of Sir Walter Scott. Industry and intellectual power, if unaided by more attractive qualities, will equally fail of success; they will produce a respectable work, valuable as a book of reference, which will slumber in forgotten obscurity in our libraries. The combination of the two is requisite to lasting fame, to general and durable success."

The general voice of his countrymen, and we might almost say of the world, has set the great history we have named in the list of standard national works; it is, as the Germans would say, a world-historical book. Its ground-tone is of course conservative; its style is vivid, animated, and pictorial; its study is almost a necessary part of a complete modern education. We think its study might be most profitably combined with that of Carlyle's powerful and original work on the same subject: in the one, the madness of revolutions is denounced and dreaded; in the other, there is the stern sympathy of an old Norseman, who gazes on a weltering battle from afar, and the earnest hailing of truth, though it comes "girt in hell-fire."

As an essayist, Sir Archibald Alison deserves very great commendation. He does not always excel: in the biographic essay, for instance, he appears immeasurably inferior to certain writers of the day; but, in many instances, and on various subjects, he attains very high excellence. In laying down great principles in political economy, he is manifestly in a congenial element; in historical subjects he is, as might be expected, sagacious and happy; and, in criticism, his vision is wide and his judgment powerful.

In the historical essays, we sometimes come upon paragraphs containing truths of the highest value and the widest application. We were delighted to find the following great fact so clearly stated; its historical worth we deem incal-

culable; were it once fairly accepted and imbibed by the human race, the gates of Limbo would be choked for three days, so much nonsense would get its mittimus:—“Subjugation by a foreign power is itself a greater calamity than any benefits with which it is accompanied can ever compensate, because, in the very act of receiving them *by force*, there is implied an entire dereliction of all that is valuable in political blessings—a security that they will remain permanent. There is no example, perhaps, to be found in the history of mankind, of political freedom being either effectually conferred by a sovereign in gift, or communicated by the force of foreign arms; but as liberty is the greatest blessing which men can enjoy, so it seems to be the law of nature that it should be the reward of intrepidity and energy alone; and that it is by the labor of his hands and the sweat of his brow that he is to earn his freedom as well as his subsistence.”

The same remark holds good of Sir Archibald’s critical essays; the principle, for instance, embodied in the following sentences, lies at the foundation of all criticism:—“The human heart is, at bottom, everywhere the same. There is infinite diversity in the dress he wears, but the naked human figure of one country scarcely differs from another. The writers who have succeeded in reaching this deep substratum, this far-hidden but common source of human action, are understood and admired over all the world. It is the same on the banks of the Simöis as on those of the Avon — on the Sierra Morena as on the Scottish hills. They are understood alike in Europe as in Asia—in ancient as in modern times; one unanimous burst of admiration salutes them from the North Cape to Cape Horn—from the age of Pisistratus to that of Napoleon.” Were we to change somewhat the expression of this thought, and substitute

"the perennial in man" for certain of its phrases, it would be astonishing how closely it would resemble a leading doctrine of Mr. Carlyle's.

The extent of information possessed by Sir Archibald; the swift glance which he can cast over it all; his animated rolling diction; his varied sympathy; his truly British absence of affectation; in a word, every excellence of his style, can be found in the following magnificent apostrophic exordium to one of his critical essays:— "There is something inexpressibly striking, it may almost be said awful, in the fame of Homer. Three thousand years have elapsed since the bard of Chios began to pour forth his strains; and their reputation, so far from declining, is on the increase. Successive nations are employed in celebrating his works; generation after generation of men are fascinated by his imagination. Discrepancies of race, of character, of institutions, of religion, of age of the world, are forgotten in the common worship of his genius. In this universal tribute of gratitude, modern Europe vies with remote antiquity, the light Frenchman with the volatile Greek, the impassioned Italian with the enthusiastic German, the sturdy Englishman with the unconquerable Roman, the aspiring Russian with the proud American. Seven cities, in ancient times, competed for the honor of having given him birth, but seventy nations have since been moulded by his productions. He gave a mythology to the ancients; he has given the fine arts to the modern world. Jupiter, Saturn, Mars, Minerva, are still household words in every tongue; Vulcan is yet the god of fire, Neptune of the ocean, Venus of Love. Juno is still our companion on moorland solitudes; Hector the faithful guardian of our flocks and homes. The highest praise yet bestowed on valor is drawn from a

comparison to the god of war; the most grateful compliment to beauty that she is encircled by the cestus of Venus. When Canova sought to embody his conceptions of heroism or loveliness, he portrayed the heroes of the *Iliad*. Flaxman's genius was elevated to the highest point in embodying its events. Epic poets, in subsequent times, have done little more than imitate his machinery, copy his characters, adopt his similes, and, in a few instances, improve upon his descriptions. Painting and statuary, for two thousand years, have been employed in striving to portray, by the pencil or the chisel, his yet breathing conceptions; language and thought themselves have been moulded by the influence of his poetry. Images of wrath are still taken from Achilles, of pride from Agamemnon, of astuteness from Ulysses, of patriotism from Hector, of tenderness from Andromache, of age from Nestor. The galleys of Rome were—the line-of-battle ships of France and England still are—called after his heroes. The Agamemnon long bore the flag of Nelson; the Bellerophon combated the gigantic P' Orient at the battle of the Nile; the Polyphemus was the third in the British line which entered the cannonade of Copenhagen; the Ajax perished by the flames within sight of the tomb of the Telamonian hero on the shores of the Hellespont; the Achilles was blown up at the battle of Trafalgar. Alexander the Great ran round the tomb of Achilles before undertaking the conquest of Asia. It was the boast of Napoleon that his mother reclined on tapestry representing the heroes of the *Iliad*, when he was brought into the world. The greatest poets, of ancient and modern times, have spent their lives in the study of his genius or the imitation of his works. The Drama of Greece was but an amplification of the disasters of the heroes of the *Iliad* on their return from Troy. The genius of Racine, Voltaire,

and Corneille, has been mainly exerted in arraying them in the garb of modern times. Parnassus is still the emblem of poetry; Olympus, of the council-seat of supreme power; Ida and the Cyprian Isle, of the goddess of love. The utmost exertion of all the arts combined on the opera stage is devoted to represent the rival goddesses as they appeared to the son of Priam on the summit of Gargarus. Withdraw from subsequent poetry the images, mythology, and characters of the *Iliad*, and what will remain? Petrarch spent his best years in restoring his verses. Tasso portrayed the siege of Jerusalem and the shock of Europe and Asia almost exactly as Homer has done the contest of the same forces, on the same shores, 3000 years before. Milton's old age, when blind and poor, was solaced by hearing the verses recited of the poet to whose conceptions his own mighty spirit had been so much indebted; and Pope deemed himself fortunate in devoting his life to the translation of the *Iliad*; and the unanimous voice of ages has confirmed his celebrated lines:—

‘ Be Homer’s works your study and delight,  
Read them by day, and meditate by night;  
Thence form your judgment, thence your maxims bring,  
And trace the muses upward to their spring.’”

We must draw our remarks abruptly to a close; our space is already exhausted. We need not say the subject is far from being so. We intended to say a good deal concerning Sir Archibald’s style; to show that here, as elsewhere, we have his distinguishing characteristics displayed — wide, not intense thought, giving rise to a flowing and diffuse, rather than a terse mode of expression — diffused, not concentrated energy, producing a constant glow rather than a piercing fire; and to point out a few of its defects. Upon

the repetitions, the mistakes in imagery, the sameness, frequently rendered the less pardonable by commonplaceness, of forms of phrase, we *could* descant, but must cover all up in this inuendo.

Sir Archibald Alison's writings are a continued protest against modern utilitarianism ; his whole life has been an effort to break Mammon's threefold chain of gold, silver, and copper ; he has exposed the dishonesty and insanity of political or party cries ; occasionally he has confounded the good with the bad, occasionally his scythe has cut down the corn with the weeds. On the whole, we think he will give us his sanction in saying that change is not wrong in itself : that the frivolous restlessness of the child, which breaks one toy and cries for another, is to be despised ; that the morbid fickleness of the hypochondriac, who thinks that a change of seat or the attainment of some dainty would insure health, is to be pitied ; but that the calm, reasonable desire to change an old habitude or dwelling for a new, entertained by the sagacious and healthy man, is to be respected ; and that it is so in the case of nations.

Sir Archibald is the son of the Rev. Archibald Alison, the celebrated writer on Taste ; he became a member of the Scottish bar ; and the government of the Earl of Derby conferred upon him the title which he adorns.

## IV.

### SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

AMONG the men who have led the van of British thought during the present century, who have stamped the impress of their genius upon the forehead of the age, and moulded the intellectual destinies of our time, there is one name preëminently fraught with interest to the student of our internal history. That name is Samuel Taylor Coleridge. In our schools of poetry, of philosophy, of theology — among our critics and our ecclesiastics, our moralists and our politicians — the influence of Coleridge has worked, silently and viewlessly, but with wide-spread and mighty power. As by a verbal talisman, his name opens to our mental gaze vast and varied fields of reflection, invokes grave, important, and thickly-crowding thoughts, and forms the centre round which countless subjects of discussion and investigation group themselves. For these reasons, superadded to the fact, that we know of no easily accessible account of his life and writings at once concise and comprehensive, we purpose to devote some considerable space to a biographic sketch of this celebrated poet and thinker.

Towards the latter half of the last century, there lived at Ottery St. Mary, in the southern quarter of the balmy and beautiful county of Devon, discharging there the duties

of vicar and schoolmaster, an eccentric, erudite, and remarkably loveable old man. He was the father of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. "The image of my father," says the latter, "my reverend, kind, learned, simple-hearted father, is a religion to me." Richter expressed pity for the man to whom his own mother had not rendered all mothers sacred. Both the remarks shed a beautiful and kindly light over the characters of their authors.

The vicar of Ottery St. Mary was twice married, and had, in all, thirteen children. Samuel Taylor was the youngest; his day of birth was the 21st of October, 1772, when he appeared "about eleven o'clock in the forenoon." He speedily gave indications of superior capacity, being able, at the completion of his third year, to read a chapter in the Bible. We soon begin to discern the operation of causes, bearing, with rather singular importance, upon the formation of his character and the shaping of his destiny. The youngest of the family, he was the object of peculiar affection to both parents, and, in consequence, excited the envious dislike of his brother Francis, and the malevolence of Molly, the nurse of the latter. Hence arose annoyances and small peevish reprisals; for the power of a boisterous and sturdy brother, and a malignant nurse, to embitter the cup of a bard in pinafore is considerable; so little Samuel became "fretful and timorous, and a tell-tale." A tell-tale is an object of united detestation on all forms of all academies; it was so at Ottery St. Mary, where Coleridge went to school; the future metaphysician was driven from play, tormented, and universally hated by the boys; he sought solace at mamma's knee and in papa's books. He became a solitary, moping child, dependent on himself for his amusements, passionately fond of books, of irritable temper, and subject to extreme variations of spirits. At six he

had read "Belisarius," "Robinson Crusoe," and "Philip Quarles," and found boundless enjoyment in the wonders and beauties of that Utopia and Eldorado of all school-boys, the Arabian Nights' Entertainments. The following is a portrait of him, about this time, as he sketched it in after years:—"So I became a dreamer, and acquired an indisposition to all bodily action, and I was fretful, and inordinately passionate; and, as I could not play at anything, and was slothful, I was despised and hated by the boys: and because I could read and spell, and had, I may truly say, a memory and understanding forced into almost unnatural ripeness, I was flattered and wondered at by all the old women. And so I became very vain, and despised most of the boys that were at all near my own age, and, before I was eight years old, I was a *character*. Sensibility, imagination, vanity, sloth, and feelings of deep and bitter contempt for almost all who traversed the orbit of my understanding, were even then prominent and manifest."

This has to us a deep significance, in the psychological consideration of Coleridge's character. The ideas lodged in the mind at this early period of life, and the habits formed, may, in after years, change their forms, and appear in manifold and diversified developments; but they retain their place with extreme obstinacy. This childhood of Coleridge's we cannot, on the whole, pronounce healthy. Little boys are naturally objects of dread, rather than of flattery, to old women. Little Robert Clive, for instance, utterly astonished and startled the old women by exhibiting himself on the steeple of Market Drayton; and turned out a man of clear and decisive mind and adamantine vigor. The playground and the meadow, with the jocund voices of his playmates round him, and in the constant consciousness that his independence has to be maintained

and defended amid their boisterous and fearless sports, is the proper place for the development of the future man. It is our belief that, in these years, an almost instinctive knowledge of character, a thorough command of the faculties, and a power of bringing them, on all emergencies, into swift energetic action, are attained; and that no subsequent education can compensate the premature devotion of these early days to mental pursuits. May we not here find the faint and unsuspected commencement of that anomalous and mournful severance between the powers of action and the powers of thought, which the world has deplored, and may so well deplore, in Coleridge?

With all his bookishness, however, with all his indolent inaction and indifference to the sports of childhood, little Samuel had a dash of fierce stubbornness in his composition. The old women, on occasion, found cause for abating their flattery: in proof, take the following anecdote. He was about seven years old, when, one evening, on severe provocation from Frank, he rushed at him, knife in hand. Mamma interfered, and Samuel Taylor, dreading chastisement, and in fiercest fury, ran away to the banks of the river Otter. The cold evening air, it was reasonably calculated, would calm his nerves, and bring him quickly home; but the calculation was incorrect. He sat down in resolute stubbornness on the banks of the river, and experienced "a gloomy inward satisfaction," from reflecting how miserable his mother would be! It was in the end of October: the night was stormy; he lay on the damp ground, with the mournful murmuring of the Otter in his ear; but he flinched not, nor relented; with dogged determination, he resolved to sleep it out. His home, meanwhile, was in a tumult of distress and consternation. Search in all directions was instituted; the village was scared from its slum-

bers, and, ere morning, the ponds and river were dragged. At five in the morning the little rascal awoke, found himself able to cry but faintly, and was utterly unable to move. His crying, though feeble, attracted Sir Stafford Northcote, who had been out all night, and he was borne home. The joy of his parents was inexpressible; but in rushed a young lady, crying out, “I hope you’ll whip him, Mrs. Coleridge!” Coleridge informs us, that neither philosophy nor religion was ever able to allay his inveterate antipathy to that woman.

Just as his youngest son was completing his ninth year, the good old vicar of Ottery St. Mary died. Through the influence of Judge Buller, a presentation to Christ’s Hospital, London, was obtained for Samuel Taylor; and about April, 1782, he went to London. Here he was, before entering the hospital, domesticated with an uncle. This uncle looked upon him as a prodigy, and was very proud of him. He took him to taverns and coffee-houses; accustomed him to hear himself called a wonderful boy; taught him to converse and discuss with volubility; and, in short “spoiled and pampered him.”

This fast mode of life, however, soon came to an end: a very different regimen and environment awaited him in Christ’s Hospital. Here he found himself under the strict discipline of Bowyer; his food was stinted; and he had no friends to encourage him by approbation, or refresh his heart by kind indulgence on a holiday. Though enlivened by occasional swimming matches, and wanderings, somewhat hunger-bitten, in the fields, his existence was, on the whole, a joyless one. “From eight to fourteen,” he says, “I was a playless day-dreamer—a *helluo librorum*.” The manner of his becoming possessed of sufficient opportunity to indulge his keen and insatiable appetite for books, was

singular and characteristic. He was wandering one day along the Strand: physically, he was pacing the hard pavement, jostled by the thronging crowd, stunned by the surrounding noises; mentally, he was breasting the waves of the Hellespont, and gazing, through his vacant but glittering eyes, at a light in the distance. The hands, as in somnambulism, caught impulse from the mind, and were cleaving the smoky air in act of swimming. Suddenly he was awakened. By feeling beneath his feet the hard dry sand on the banks of the moonlit Bosphorus, and the kiss of Hero on his lips? No: but by a sudden grasp of the hand, and an exclamation in his ears, "What! so young and so wicked!" His wandering, unconscious fingers had come into too close proximity with a passenger's pocket, and pocket-picking was suspected. The simple-hearted little dreamer told the whole truth: belief could not be withheld, for the whole, we can well see, was written on his cheek and in his eye; and the man, interested in the boy, obtained him access to a circulating library. Reading was henceforth his constant occupation, his unfailing solace. "My whole being," we quote his own words, "was, with eyes closed to every object of present sense, to crumple myself up in a sunny corner, and read, read, read." He went right through the library. He was ever first in his class, occupying that station not from any impulse of ambition or youthful emulation, but simply by his surpassing powers. His general book knowledge was wonderful. Before fifteen, he had sounded the depths of metaphysics and theology, was a fluent master of the learned languages, and had comparatively lost taste for history and separate facts. How strongly developed, even at that early age, was the unalloyed exercise of the intellectual powers! How clearly can we trace, gradually widening, the lamentable severance

of which we have spoken! On the whole, what a wonderful boy was this Samuel Taylor Coleridge! The child, even, is father of the man; and, in the boy, his lineaments, both mental and physical, become ever more conspicuous. Already the dream of fancy, or the abstract effort of thought, had greater charms for Coleridge, than the surrounding, or even the historical, realities of life; already his mind had become its own dwelling-place, and found within its own compass a sufficiency of object to allure and delight; already he had drawn astonishment to his commanding faculties. Whether the extreme development of the receptive powers, and the constant inundation of the mind by the ideas of other men, might not, to some extent, weaken the sinews of the soul, and implant the seeds of that irresolution which clouded his latter days, were a question; we would be disposed to render it an affirmative answer. He soon displayed an inability to tread in beaten paths, to pursue common methods. He might be found, during play hours, reading Virgil "for pleasure;" but he could not give a single rule of syntax, save in a way of his own.

His reading was, as might be supposed, exceedingly varied. It reached Greek and Latin medical books on the one side, and Voltaire's "*Philosophical Dictionary*" on the other. This latter appeared to the boy conclusive; to Bowyer, it did not. In utter disrespect for freedom of opinion, and the finer feelings of Samuel's bosom, Bowyer did not attempt, by laborious effort of philosophical reasoning, to re-convince him; he gave him a sound flogging! It appears to have acted with potent persuasion; and Coleridge called it, in after life, the only just flogging he ever received from him.

In February, 1791, Coleridge entered at Jesus College, Cambridge. He speedily distinguished himself by winning

a gold medal, for a Greek ode on the slave trade; but, in various subsequent competitions, during his university career, his endeavors were not attended with corresponding success. As heretofore, he was by no means a methodic student, but he still continued a voracious and desultory reader. He gave proofs, also, of that astonishing conversational power by which he afterwards became so distinguished. His room was the resort of the gowned politicians; and Coleridge, besides being the life and fire of debate, put them, by means of his wonderful memory and swift reading, in possession of the latest political pamphlets.

It was a time of extreme excitement. The French Revolution was exploding; the most wonderful series of events, since the Reformation, was taking place; the long imprisoned winds had burst their cavern, and their noise was going over the world: Coleridge, as all others, felt the influence. The whole atmosphere, political and literary, vibrated with excitement; the glories of the latter morning were deemed to be arising; and thousands of the fiery-hearted youth of the land hastened to enrol themselves under the banners of the good cause.

Principles are rained in blood: that has long been an ascertained fact. And what a deluge of blood did it require to rain this one principle; yea, may we not, from the general appearance of the world at present, predict that even more blood must be shed ere men are fully convinced of it—namely, that, by simply leaving mankind to the freedom of their own will, they will arrive, not at regeneration and highest felicity, but at destruction, misery, and confusion worse confounded? Surely the French Revolution might have taught us this, and instructed us to look for final regeneration to the heavens. But the lesson, if we are now to esteem it acquired, was, as we say, hard to

teach. A whole Egyptian inundation of blood was required to water, and enable to take deep root, this one principle; and, in pursuance of a method which nature very often adopts, its contrary was first shown in full operation. Remove the restraints of tyranny; open wide the floodgates, so long pent up, of human love and sympathy; and all men, throwing up their caps to welcome the time of peace, will, simultaneously and of necessity, rush into each other's arms! Such was the faith of Shelley, embodied in the "Revolt of Islam;" such was the belief, for a brief period, of Robert Southey; such was the faith which threw some method into, and some brilliant hues over, the wild, almost demoniac, but yet heartfelt philanthropy of Byron; such were the hopes which, for a time, fed the enthusiasm, and based the dream-fabrics, of Coleridge.

Of his devotion to this creed, he found means of giving proof when at college; it was a proof characteristic of the man. He was, we must remark, of gentle, truly loveable nature; honest, brave, ardent; but not by any means fierce or truculent. He did not plan a college rebellion, for the regeneration of society; he did not, by fiery and desperate audacity, exasperate the university authorities; he displayed his attachment to new era principles in the following somewhat different manner. On the green lawns before St. John's and Trinity Colleges, a train of gunpowder was to be laid, imprinting the grand watchwords of the new epoch, "Liberty" and "Equality." By the ignition of the gunpowder, the words were to be burned into the grass, and to stand forth there, seen by the sun above, and the college windows farther down, for certain days, a monition and benignant illumination to all the world. A "late chancellor of the exchequer" executed the redoubtable plan; and

so Coleridge vindicated his claim to the title of champion of democracy.

At this period of his career, Coleridge was Unitarian in his religious principles. His grounds of belief were not those commonly held by the professors of that creed. He distinctly avowed his conviction, that the Scriptures taught the doctrine of the Trinity; and that the attempts to explain away their statements on the question, in which Unitarians indulged, were utterly unjustifiable. His reasons were almost wholly subjective. Refusing to accede to the doctrine of the atonement, and denying the divinity of our Lord, he calmly pronounced these beliefs the Platonisms or Rabbinisms of the apostles John and Paul. A fuller development of his mental powers; a wider and more searching survey of the realms of truth; and a profounder knowledge of the problems of human history, and the wants and workings of the human heart, led him afterwards to the unwavering conviction that Unitarianism was null and void.

Ere this time, Coleridge had written a considerable quantity of poetry. On the whole, it was not of a very astonishing description. A delicacy of fancy, without singular exuberance of power; a command of soft and brilliant language, at times overladen with ornament; occasional vigorous personation; these comprehend the main beauties and merits of his earliest pieces. "The Songs of the Pixies," is a piece of fine fancy-painting, indicating a true eye for nature, and a power of delicately pencilling her gentlest and fairest forms. This poem seems to lie just on the line of demarcation between the years of youth and those of early manhood.

Various circumstances contributed to embitter and darken the latter part of Coleridge's university career. Some pub-

lic competitions, as the reader will have gathered, resulted in a way to disappoint his expectations. His Unitarian principles, which he was far too honest to disavow, barred the gates of preferment. And some debts, which his simplicity and want of decision had led him to contract, subjected him to numerous and harassing annoyances. Besides all this, we have found it asserted, that his mild and susceptible heart had been sorely vexed in some love affair. The warm-hearted, dreaming youth was, in fact, peculiarly sensible to the enchantment of female gentleness and beauty; while, of a surety, but few girls were, or ever are, to be found, capable of loving, and of corresponding to the ideal of, the author of "Genevieve."

In November, 1793, he suddenly quitted Cambridge for London. Arrived in the "great brick desert," feeling the loneliness which a stranger may experience when surrounded by thronging myriads of his fellow-men, to him mere automata, and finding himself speedily reduced to pecuniary straits, occasioned partly by his Goldsmithian readiness to give money to any distressed object, he cast about for some means of present subsistence. Shifts there were few; these were none of the choicest, and hunger was menacing; he adopted the singular one of—enlisting as a dragoon. Silas Tomken Cumberbatch (S. T. C.) was the imposing designation by which he was known to his fellow-soldiers; and, under such auspices as appeared, he commenced his military career.

Now it soon became manifest, that nature, whatever her generosity or ungenerosity, had not gifted this Silas Tomken Cumberbatch with qualities to enable him to discharge creditably the functions of a dragoon. Far-stretching flights into dreamland on the wings of fancy, imagined beating of the Hellespont waves with a Hero's lamp in view, ab-

stract ponderings on theology and metaphysics, interfere objectionably with the grooming of one's horse! Besides, the man has no "ambition," and seems stupidly callous to the attractions of "glory." Accordingly, he meets with no promotion; never rises out of the awkward squad; and at drill, flounders painfully about, so as to provoke the exclamation of a facetious serjeant, "Take care of that Cumberbatch—take care of him, for he will ride over you!"

What a scene! Was there ever, since the days of the mighty hunter, such a private soldier? What have our painters been about? What more supremely appropriate theme could be imagined, for a national painting than this scene of "Cumberbatch on drill," or "Apollo as a dragoon?" "The rapt one of the godlike forehead;" the man whose impulse has probably gone deeper than that of any other into the vital springs of British thought and general mental development in this nineteenth century; the man at whose feet men of genius and fame sat, like children round a wizard, earnestly regardful of his smallest word; stumbling and staggering about, on his ill-groomed steed, the most awkward of the awkward squad! Talk of Kilmenie among the rusties, after her sojourn by the celestial streams; talk of Apollo amid the gaping herdsmen of Admetus; this of Coleridge among the dragoons beats them all hollow!

"Eheu! quam infortunii miserrimum est fuisse felicem!" This sentence, to the utter surprise of an officer who observed it, and, we doubt not, the sheer uncomprehending amazement of his brother privates, Silas had inscribed on his stable wall. With his brother soldiers he was popular; he wrote their letters, entertained and astonished them with historic narrations, and won their hearts by his gentleness; while they, in return, assisted him to groom his horse. We hear, likewise, of one of the officers—the same, we pre-

sume, who made the above discovery—condescendingly permitting him, when their path lay in the country and not in the town, to walk abreast with himself and enter into conversation. How indulgent! How condescending! He would not find such conversation in the messroom, we daresay; such conversation was probably not to be found in the British Islands; the day was coming when Hazlitt, Lamb, Carlyle, and De Quincey, were to listen, in rapt attention, to the tones of that conversation!

At length, after some four months' drill, the astonishing dragoon was discharged. He returned for some short time to Cambridge, but quitted it soon and forever.

In the summer of 1794, Coleridge, on a visit to Oxford, became acquainted with a young man named Robert Southey; a steady thoroughgoing worker, of strong literary tastes and vast information; who also was under the influence of the Liberty and Equality mania. An acquaintance, which soon ripened into friendship, sprung up between them; there was a strong, perhaps radical, dissimilarity between their characters; but the ethereal spark in either bosom urged them together. This intimacy and this friendship gave tone to much of the subsequent history of Coleridge, and furnish us with one of the raciest and most delicately comic of its episodes. The episode is that of world-renowned Pantisocracy. We shall glance at it.

The scheme, as seems generally agreed, originated with Coleridge; a beautiful dream-poem it was, which he mistook for a reality. The amelioration of the species, the regeneration of the world, the attainment of unmitigated felicity here below, were its objects; the excitement of the French Revolution, with which the air was still tremulous, gave hue to the undertaking. A coterie of choice spirits, free from all stain of selfishness, and with every energy

devoted to the above grand ends, was to be selected: these benign and stainless individuals were to select just as many young ladies of similar perfection, and marry them; the whole were then to take shipping for the banks of the Susquehanna River, beyond the blue Atlantic. This Susquehanna was chosen, Coleridge informed Gillman, on account of the name being pretty and metrical! Here the choice spirits male were to toil, untiring and unselfish, in the supposable manner of their father Adam *before* the fall; the choice spirits female were to do the household work, and perform all the delicate sweetesses appointed them by nature; all taint of selfishness, all deleterious admixture, of whatever sort, of human failing was to be non-existent. The unruffled felicity of a second Eden was to be the unquestioned result. Meanwhile, the world, in amazement at its own long stupidity, and rapt admiration at the dwellers in the new Happy Valley, was to open all its prison gates, fling all its crowns into Limbo, and sheathe sword from pole to pole! Then, by slow degrees or more rapidly, after a gently-brightening silver age or in full and sudden glory, the long-postponed golden age was to gleam upon the world! All living beings were to be embraced in the scheme of love. Hear this:—

“Innocent Foal! thou poor despised Forlorn!  
I hail thee Brother — spite of the fool’s scorn!  
And fain would take thee with me, in the Dell  
Of Peace and mild Equality to dwell.  
Where Toil shall call the charmer Health his bride,  
And Laughter tickle Plenty’s ribless side!  
How thou wouldest toss thy heels in gamesome play,  
And frisk about as lamb or kitten gay!”

From bards to donkeys the blessings of Pantisocracy were to extend!

The pleading of this unassailable scheme, and the object of raising the terrestrial element of cash, caused much lecturing in Bristol, whence the world-renovating expedition was to sail. In this town, abode one Joseph Cottle: a man whose nature we can confidently pronounce one of the gentlest, noblest, purest, and most generous to be met with in literary annals, and to whom the world is deeply indebted for his published reminiscences of Coleridge and Southey; he was a bookseller, and warmly patronized genius. Cottle became acquainted with the schemers; enjoyed much their conversation; encouraged their efforts; and lived in hourly expectation of the sailing of the fateful ship, bound for the Elysian Susquehanna. His nerves, one fine morning, were thoroughly and conclusively calmed by the receipt of the following note:—

“MY DEAR SIR,—Can you conveniently lend me five pounds, as we want a little more than four pounds to make up our lodging bill, which is indeed much higher than we expected; seven weeks, and Burnet’s lodging for twelve weeks, amounting to twelve pounds.—Yours affectionately,

S. T. COLERIDGE.”

Four pounds wanting for a lodging-bill, and the regeneration of the world in hand! One begins to fear that the tough old incorrigible is not to be regenerated yet! Pantisocracy vanishes into vacuity, or is drowned in peals of “inextinguishable laughter!”

Did it all vanish then? Did the whole of the elaborate and fairly-schemed plan fleet into nonentity, and the aerial elemental stuff which dreams are made of? Oh no; very decidedly not. The golden age, as usual, hung back; the Eden on the banks of the musically-named Susquehanna could not be set agoing, without fully more than “four

'pounds to pay our lodging-bill ;' but there was one part of the scheme, which, being of the ethereal sort, and flourishing well when fanned by the airs which blow from dream-land, took deep root. This part, as all our fair readers anticipate, was that in which the young ladies figured; Coleridge and Southey were both engaged in marriage. The union of the former with Miss Sarah Fricker took place on the 4th of October, 1795 ; the provision by which the youthful husband purposed to support himself and his bride being—an engagement, on the part of Cottle, to give him a guinea and a half for every hundred lines of poetry which he delivered him !

This financial scheme, it was found, would not work ; in fact, to secure a competency in this way, one would out-write Homer before his marriage coat, if very carefully preserved, was out at elbow. Cottle paid some guineas in advance ; but Pegasus scorned to be yoked in the provision cart ; and, on the whole, some more substantial and certain plan of subsistence was found necessary. The young couple had taken up their abode at Clevedon, a village on the banks of the Severn.

The mind of Coleridge was always scheming, and generally his plans were on a gigantic scale ; Cottle tells us of a list of eighteen contemplated works, not one of which was accomplished : his schemes almost invariably, like those of Mithridates, found themselves unduly seconded, and ineffectually actualized, in execution. His schemes on the present occasion, however, were by no means of a singularly romantic or impracticable character. They were chiefly three : to found a school, to become a Unitarian preacher, and to undertake the editing of a magazine. The latter, after consideration, and with somewhat of reluctance, was adopted. The magazine was to be entitled the

“Watchman;” it was to consist of high political writing, of biographical essays, and of reviews; its date of appearance was fixed for Tuesday, 1st March, 1796, and its price was to be fourpence.

Whether the idea of a magazine was congenial or uncongenial to the mind of Coleridge, he entered upon its realization with ardent and manly energy. He undertook a tour to collect subscribers; and accompanied the performance of this primary object with the occasional delivery of pulpit discourses. His religious views were still Unitarian, and his pulpit garb would have somewhat startled an orthodox audience; on one occasion, he appeared in blue coat and white waistcoat. His discourses, too, were “previously peppered with politics;” and we must shock our readers by informing them, that subjects were afforded for two of them by the corn-laws and the hair-powder tax!

The tour preliminary to the publication of the “Watchman,” is one of the most brilliant passages in Coleridge’s history. His mind was in the warm glow of opening manhood; full of hope, ardor, courage, love; we can well imagine that the Cherub Contemplation seemed ever to lie and dream in his dark gray eye. His conversation was at the time perhaps at its climax; men hung in wondering silence on the rhythmic stream which, in wild lyric grandeur, or in gentlest lute tones, rolled ever from his lips. His eloquence attracted crowds when he appeared in the pulpit; he was the “figurante” in all companies, and his irresistible powers of persuasion increased his list of subscribers, beyond even his own imaginings. Of his pulpit manner, we may form an idea from Hazlitt’s description of him a few years afterwards. Earnest solemnity, despite his dress and politics, seems to have distinguished his mode of delivery; poetic adornment, graphic power, and enthu-

siastic exuberance, his style. "The tones of his voice were musical and impressive," says Hazlitt; and "he launched into his subject like an eagle dallying with the wind." No wonder that he attracted crowds.

At Nottingham, he had some dealings with Dr. Darwin, who utterly scorned religion, and thought himself in position to banter Coleridge on the subject. His arguments fell of course like snowflakes on a river; they might, Coleridge said, have been of force at fifteen, but provoked only a smile at twenty. "He (Dr. Darwin) boasted that he had never read one book in favor of such stuff, but that he had read all the works of infidels." The impartial, free-thinking man! "Such," adds Coleridge, "are all the infidels whom I have known."

We said above, that his powers of persuasion during this tour were irresistible; but it is unsafe to indulge in such poetic generalizations; the dull tints and dusts of earth so obstinately mingle with all human glories. Coleridge was in Birmingham, beating up for subscribers—enchanting, astonishing, electrifying. In the strict prosecution of his design, he was destined speedily to find his perseverance and courageous scorn of difficulties put to the test. We must give his own description of the scene; it at once indicates the graphic truth of his pencil, and illustrates the fine hearty jovialty which lay deep in his bosom:—"My campaign commenced at Birmingham, and my first attack was on a rigid Calvinist, a tallow-chandler by trade. He was a tall, dingy man, in whom length was so predominant over breadth, that he might almost have been borrowed for a foundry poker. Oh that face! . . . I have it before me at this moment. The lank, black, twine-like hair, pinguinitescent, cut in a straight line, along the black stubble of his thin gunpowder eyebrows, that looked like a

scorched aftermath from a last week's shaving. His coat collar behind, in perfect unison, both of color and lustre, with the coarse yet glib cordage that I suppose he called his hair, and which, with a bend inward at the nape of the neck (the only approach to flexure in his whole figure), slunk in behind his waistcoat; while the countenance, lank, dark, very *hard*, and with strong perpendicular furrows, gave me a dim notion of some one looking at me through a *used* gridiron, all soot, grease, and iron!"

This man was a friend of the species, and grand society-regenerator. Attentively he listened to "the heaven-eyed creature," as he poured forth, now like a cataract of sunny foam, now like an *A*olian harp, his eloquent pleadings; the tallow fumes meanwhile wandering intrusively about the nostrils of the wondrous speaker, mournfully reminiscent of earth. Persuasion that might have melted Shylock having had due course, Coleridge paused to become aware of the effect. "And what, sir, might the cost be?" "Only fourpence (oh how I felt the anti-climax, the abysmal bathos of that **FOURPENCE**), only fourpence, sir, each number, to be published on every eighth day." "That comes to a deal of money at the end of a year; and how much did you say there was to be for the money?" "Thirty-two pages, sir; large octavo, closely printed." "Thirty and two pages? Bless me, why, except what I does in a family way on the Sabbath, that's more than I ever read, sir, all the year round! I am as great a one as any man in Brummagem, sir, for liberty and truth, and all them sort of things, but as to this (no offence, I hope, sir) I must beg to be excused."

From Sheffield, in the January of 1796, Coleridge wrote to a friend reporting progress. In that letter occurs the following sentence:—"Indeed, I want firmness; I perceive I do. I have that within me which makes it difficult to

say No, repeatedly, to a number of persons who seem uneasy and anxious." This, so strictly true, we regard as a physiognomic glimpse of importance. With all his brilliancy, with all his marvellous powers, with all the genius which dwelt in his wonderful eye, the great disruption between the powers of thought and the powers of action had begun to be conspicuously manifest in Coleridge. He had not the power of saying No! And yet how necessary, how utterly indispensable, in this world of ours, is the ability to utter, on needful occasions, a clear, defiant No! Mentally or physically it has to be done every hour of our life; and would we not be near the mark, in dating the full development of self-sustained manhood at the thorough attainment of that power?

The "Watchman" did not succeed; the causes of its failure were manifold. Too much was expected by the public; a sufficient staff of talented men was not attached to it; and, finally, the close, accurate drudgery, necessary to the successful superintendence of a magazine, was singularly uncongenial to Coleridge's nature.

Some time after the publication of the "Watchman" ceased, we find its editor stationed at Stowey. Here, though for a brief space he enjoyed tranquillity and comfort, the frustrated hopes of his past life sunk deep into his soul. He was approaching a critical and important epoch in his spiritual development. It can be discerned, with indubitable distinctness, that his mind was in an unhealthy portentous state — feverish, excited, unsettled; now in the whirl of fiery enthusiasm and hilarity, now in the morbid disquietude of hopeless depression; now scheming stupendous epics, now cowering, anxious and trembling, to propitiate the "two Giants, Bread and Cheese." All this

points to a shattered nervous state and prompts mournful forebodings.

About this time, Coleridge was of very striking appearance. In person he was somewhat full, and rather above the common size; his complexion inclined to light, but was shaded by dark hair; his eyebrows were large and protruding; his forehead, as Hazlitt describes it, was "broad and high, as if built of ivory;" his large gray eye rolled and gleamed, in the light of mild but mighty genius.

We have arrived, as we said, at a grand crisis in his character and history. We have seen him in his youth; we have marked the swift expansion of his faculties, the first meteoric blaze of his fame. His path hitherto must be pronounced brilliant. Not unshaded by sorrow, not untinctured with error, it is yet encompassed with a grand auroral radiance. The light of genius flashing from his eye, the light of hope and ardor firing his bosom, he has trod along, kindling expectant admiration in all breasts. His very errors have been those of a noble and mighty nature. The banner of human advancement had been thrown abroad upon the winds, inscribed with liberty and with love; and ardent young souls hastened to range themselves beneath it; unweeting that those golden words had been, or were to be, soaked and blotted with blood. With what in the mighty onrushing of the French Revolution was truly noble, with the perennial truths of freedom and advancement, Coleridge had deeply sympathized; in its wild volcanic fury he never shared, and, when murder and despotism sat in its high places, he utterly abjured its cause. For a time, the ardent, all-fusing love in his own bosom, had bathed the world in kindness and beauty; the tones of his own heart were those of tenderness and gentlest sympathy, and he had dreamed that he had heard respon-

sive notes from the bosoms of all his fellow-men. Hence had arisen the Susquehanna scheme, the beautiful morning dream of the Happy Valley. Already, in various ways, he had evinced gigantic powers. In a constellation of rarely gifted youths, he had been the central light, the most dazzling star; his eloquence and his conversation had shed enchantment around him: his "Religious Musings," to specify no other of his juvenile performances, had been the indubitable pledge of power to scale the loftiest heights of thought and of fame, and to sit there crowned among the mightiest.

But his path, dazzling and wonderful as it was, had been strictly that of youth. An element of excitement had encompassed him; the atmosphere of his mind had been tempestuous and fiery; and the grand question which presents itself, at the momentous period of his history at which we have now arrived, is this:—Is his radiance to be merely meteoric, intermittent, and youthful; or is he henceforth, in calmer air and with steadier glory, to shine in the placid majesty of manhood?

Southern, the friend of his youth, and the sharer for a time in his dreams, with powers whose might was never considered so rare or so wonderful as his own, calmly and courageously marched from the dreamland of youth, and in gathered energy commenced life victoriously as a man; Wordsworth, gentle but stalwart-hearted, had virtually done the same; and how was it with him, whose eye gleamed with a more unearthly radiance than that of either, who was among them the acknowledged monarch—Samuel Taylor Coleridge?

What, in our view, marks the full development of manhood, and dissevers it totally from the states of boyhood and youth, is a sustained *self-mastery*. When the energies

are not the slaves of excitement; when the fiery impatience of occasional effort has become the perseverent energy of continued work; when the powers are ranged in ordered submission under the will; when the motives are not the faint wavering fatui or meteors of the hour, but the guiding principle of the life is clearly ascertained and resolutely adhered to; — then the boy has passed into the man.

According to this view of the matter, it is manifest that sound healthful manhood does not necessarily presuppose any vastness of mental power, any extraordinary or astonishing genius. A William Burns, for instance, toiling calmly and with stern endurance to find sustenance for himself and his children, may be a sounder, and in stricter terms, a more fully developed man than his world-shaking son the poet, with his wildly-tossing passions and his sadly blasted hopes. The miner, who works resolutely and without flinching in the bowels of the earth, may be more a man than the feverish creature of excitement, who now soars above the clouds, and now lies prostrate and hopeless in the mire. Who ever said Byron was a fully developed man?

Still more, it is precisely where the powers are mightiest, and the passions strongest, that the difficulty of attaining calm manhood is sternest. A comparatively easy task it is for the man of common, everyday powers, to attain their proper command, to restrain them within their due mechanic circle. But when the passions are fierce and mighty as whirlwinds, when the breast heaves with volcanic fire, and the eye rolls in frenzy, when the sensibility is as intensely acute to disappointment as the hopes are bright and certain of failure; then it is, at the momentous crisis when the dreams of youth, whose light has hitherto suffused the world, vanish finally from the soul, that the struggle is

tremendous. The bearing of these remarks upon the character of Coleridge will become manifest as we proceed.

After the failure of the "Watchman," we find Coleridge residing at Stowey. The urgency of a regular mode of subsistence had become more imperative, from the fact of his having become a father. Pecuniary affairs, however, wore by no means a hopeless aspect; Charles Lloyd, a young man who had conceived the profoundest admiration for Coleridge's genius, had taken up his abode with him; occasional sums were obtained from Cottle for poetry; and at length, in 1798, Mr. Josiah Wedgwood and his brother, who patriotically desired that Coleridge's marvellous powers should be untrammelled by a profession, bestowed upon him an annuity of £150. One half of this sum ceased to be paid at a subsequent period.

Ere proceeding in our history of Coleridge's character, we must indulge our readers and ourselves with a glance at his Stowey life; a sunny prospect, which we shall soon find enveloped in cloud and darkness. We avail ourselves of the words of kind and honest Cottle, who waxes hilarious and quasi-poetical on the occasion; the time was June 29, 1797. "Mr. C. took peculiar delight in assuring me (at least at that time) how happy he was; exhibiting successively his house, his garden, his orchard, laden with fruit; and also the contrivances he had made to unite his two neighbors' domains with his own. . . . After the grand circuit had been accomplished, by hospitable contrivance, we approached the "Jasmine Harbor," where, to our gratifying surprise, we found the tripod table laden with delicious bread and cheese, surmounted by a brown mug of true Taunton ale. We instinctively took our seats; and there must have been some downright witchery in the provisions, which surpassed all of its kind; nothing like it

on the wide terrene, and one glass of the Taunton settled it to an axiom. While the dappled sunbeams played on our table, through the umbrageous canopy, the very birds seemed to participate in our felicities, and poured forth their selectest anthems. As we sat in our sylvan hall of splendor, a company of the happiest mortals (T. Poole, C. Lloyd, S. T. Coleridge, and J. C.), the bright blue heavens, the sporting insects, the balmy zephyrs, the feathered choristers, the sympathy of friends, all augmented the pleasurable to the highest point this side the celestial! . . . . While thus elevated, in the universal current of our feelings, Mrs. Coleridge appeared, with her fine Hartley; we all smiled, but the father's joy was transcendental!"

All this was too bright to last. As yet, indeed, there seemed no great cause for abatement of the hopes of those who, in ever-increasing numbers and in ever-deepening veneration, encircled Coleridge. We might say, in fact, that it was much the reverse. The dreamy disappointments of youth might become matter for a pleasant smile; the poetic fire, in which he had clothed nature and man, might yet warm his own bosom and nerve his own arm.

His political opinions had attained a fuller development; while retaining all the enthusiasm and love of early days, they had settled into assured stability, on a foundation of soundest wisdom. His theological views also—a fact of momentous importance, and fraught with richest hope—had undergone revision. More profoundly and with truer reverence, he had acknowledged, in his inmost soul, that the Bible is, in very truth, the articulate voice of God to man; he had perceived that the whole history of the human race, for the silent but mighty facts of which no youthful imaginings could be substituted, hath, for its centre, its keystone, and its crown, the Lord Jesus Christ; he had

begun to discern that religion, if in any sense strictly revealed, must superadd something to the dicta of nature, and be a “religation” or binding again; he had heard the deep and awful words of mystery which rise from the whole frame of nature and the whole inner world of the soul; and, in meekest but manliest adoration, he had bowed down to the triune God. Oh, how Hope now, dashing aside the veil of the shadowing years, seems still, despite our knowledge of the end, with brightest smile to point to Coleridge, as he was at the close of the last century!

In the years of boyhood and youth, Coleridge’s constitution, although not peculiarly robust, was unquestionably sound and healthful; not free from weakness, not unvisited by pain, he was yet indubitably the possessor of a buoyant spirit and vigorous frame. But on one occasion, about the close of the century, he had been visited by severe and singular bodily ailment, accompanied by excruciating pain. For relief, he had recourse to—opium! Finding the relief he sought, and unaware that he was dallying with a power, whose deadly necromancy withers the arm and palsies the soul, he went on, heedless and unweeting, until resistance was vain.

Here, then, was the blasting of all hope; here was the attainment of calm manhood rendered forever impossible; henceforward the chaining of his energies in ordered submission to the ear of will, was hopeless.

Beyond all doubt, this was the proximate and decisive agent in bringing about the tragic anomaly of Coleridge’s after life. Yet there were other influences at work, which acted mainly as hindrances and counteracting forces to his at once awakening from his trance, and tearing from his bosom the vampire that drank his life-blood. The shattering of his youthful schemes, and the failure of his youthful

hopes, had wakened tones of deepest sorrow in his soul. We hear of a “calm hopelessness,” of long days of despairing anticipation and unbrightened foreboding. Besides this, we have reason for thinking it a fact, and we need do no more than mention it, that his marriage had in some respects been an unhappy one.

But for the mighty magic of opium, which, at such a crisis, came in to throw a shade of most mournful gloom over the character and life of Coleridge, these secondary disturbing influences might well have been overborne; but for the depressing effects of these influences, opium might never have succeeded in throwing its withering influence, finally, and irremediably, over his soul: in their mutual operation, they produced what we have called the grand severance in Coleridge’s character.

After visiting Germany, in 1798, and making a stay there of fourteen months, Coleridge settled in the Lake country, and engaged largely in newspaper writing. In 1804, he visited Malta. Returning, after a residence of considerable length, to England, we find him, in the year 1809, commencing, once more, the publication of a periodical, this time named, “The Friend.” During the period when this paper appeared, the circulating libraries were doubtless in as full operation as ever; the British public of this enlightened age were hanging over their novels, or preparing, perhaps, their ball dresses; commerce was rushing heedless onwards; Mammon was stalking abroad, with all eyes turned towards him in supplication or praise; “The Friend,” being sadly over-freighted with wisdom, and having no direct bearing on cash, but only on the eternal destiny of man, and his true and lasting temporal amelioration, could not be carried on for lack of support! This is a fact; and admits of being thus broadly stated. As we peruse those

volumes, now promising fair for literary immortality, in which the published numbers of "The Friend" are preserved to us, it appears strange and even humiliating, that such periodical writing should, in our century, under whatever disadvantages, have failed of adequate support. But what, after all, must we say? That, in this defective world, small worms destroy imposing gourds, that, as Richter remarks, though wings are admirable for the azure, we want boots for the paving stones, that the consummate linguistic skill and high metaphysics of Coleridge were rendered unavailing, not solely through the indifference or stupidity of his countrymen, but through such small and undignified shortcomings, as want of punctuality, want of clearness, and want of business tact.

Towards the end of his sojourn at the Lakes, Coleridge's mode of existence, as we learn from Mr. De Quincey, was cheerless and anomalous. Towards the afternoon, he descended from his bedroom; and through the still watches of the night, until the morning struck the stars, his lonely taper burned mournfully in his window. The same writer assures us, that the intense glow of sympathy and joyous admiration, with which Coleridge had once gazed upon Nature, had now well-nigh died away: the magic had passed from stream and lake, from wood and mountain, from the ocean and the stars: they woke no tones of music in his breast, they lit no fire of rapture in his eye. Ah, what a mournful change was here!

In 1810, Coleridge quitted the Lake country forever. In the early part of 1814, we find him lecturing at Bristol. Opium was now in the full exercise of its tyrannic and deadly power. Sternly, and with sincerest effort, he resisted it, but its magic became ever the more irresistible; its necromancy had smitten his energy with fatal paralysis.

The effort to free himself from the spell was vain; the thrill of temporary gladness, as of returning youth and rapture, formed so witching a contrast to the remorse and almost despair of his disenchanted hours, that he ever threw himself again into the arms of his destroyer. He seems to us to be sorrowfully, but truly, imaged by his own “miserable knight,” haunted by the spectre of a bright and beautiful lady, from the ghastly gleam of whose eye he could not escape, and whom he *knew* to be a fiend.

The wild fire in his eye, and other indications, revealed to Cottle the melancholy state of affairs. In deepest distress, and actuated by his sincere and tender love for Coleridge, he resolved to address to him an expostulating letter. With Cottle, we can find no fault; the voice of duty to his friend and to his God prompted the effort; but, with deep conviction we must say, he was not the man to perform the task. The delicate and reverential kindness which every sentence should have breathed; the admiring and bewailing pity, distinguishing minutely and unremittingly between crime and disease; the manliness of friendly and most earnest advice, with no tone of censorious exhortation or blame;—these were beyond the mental capacity of Cottle. How sad are these words in reply:—“You have poured oil in the raw and festering wounds of an old friend’s conscience, Cottle! but it is *oil of vitriol!*” And what an unfathomable sorrow is here:—“I have prayed, with drops of agony on my brow; trembling, not only before the justice of my Maker, but even before the mercy of my Redeemer. ‘I gave thee so many talents, what hast thou done with them?’”

Ah! little did Cottle, or even Southey, with his far greater soul, know of the fearful battle which this mighty and valiant spirit had to fight; we must even say that they

did not fully attend to what they might plainly have discerned. Does not the whole course of Coleridge's life indicate sternest effort? His newspaper writing, his editing "The Friend," his long researches into metaphysics and theology; do they not show an earnest and noble effort to attain "the perennial fireproof joys of constant employment?" do they not show a soul struggling, with Titanic effort and deadly perseverance, against a viewless but resistless power? Could aught which Southey or Cottle might say, instil a deeper abhorrence of opium into Coleridge's mind than was there already? Could any human hand portray its effects and influence, in darker hues, than those in which, in his own agonized and blasted soul, they were imaged already to the eye of Coleridge? It was not advice or exhortation which was needed; it was kindliest, tenderest co-operation with the efforts of the sufferer: it was admiring sympathy and respectful assistance. Good conscientious Cottle somewhat mistook his function in addressing Coleridge, and his attempt was, of course, unattended with any important result.

In 1816, Coleridge took up his abode at Highgate, in the immediate vicinity of London, under the roof of Mr. Gillman, a physician. Here he thenceforward remained; and here he terminated his career, in 1834. During this long period, he constantly displayed his astonishing intellectual powers; and exhibited, along with them, the marvellous and melancholy prostration of the powers of action. On the whole, from these years there seems to breathe a wailing cadence of unutterable sorrow. Splendors there were, beautiful, meteoric; but they appear but as the gleaming of nightly meteors over the pale Arctic snow, far different from the calm and brightening beams of morn. His mental powers were still mighty and rampant, as an army of

lions; but his will, that should have guided and subdued them, was feeble and wavering as a deer.

Yet how wonderful is the power of genius! Mournfully as the lines of decision had faded from that cheek, sadly as the fire was dimmed in that eye, broken as were the tones of that once soft and melodious voice, ardent and gifted souls were drawn instinctively towards him. Week after week and year after year, did they listen attentively, did they journey patiently; drawn by the weird gleam of the halo of genius round his brow. A sort of undefined glory encompassed him; an influence proceeded from him as of some wizard power, allied to inspiration, and linked in some mysterious manner with infinitude. Round his shrine was ever a brilliant troop of powerful young minds; among the others, we can see William Hazlitt, John Sterling, and Thomas Carlyle.

The last mentioned writer, in his lately published life of John Sterling, has devoted a chapter to Coleridge; and we present to our readers the following sketch of him during his Highgate life, from Carlyle's unequalled pencil:—

“Coleridge sat on the brow of Highgate Hill in those years, looking down on London and its smoke-tumult, like a sage escaped from the inanity of life’s battle; attracting towards him the thoughts of innumerable brave souls still engaged there. . . . The good man, he was now getting old, towards sixty perhaps; and gave you the idea of a life that had been full of sufferings; a life heavy-laden, half-vanquished, still swimming painfully in seas of manifold physical, and other bewilderment. Brow and head were round, and of massive weight, but the face was flabby and irresolute. The deep eyes, of a light hazel, were as full of sorrow as of inspiration; confused pain looked mildly from them, as in a kind of mild astonishment. The whole figure

and air, good and amiable otherwise, might be called flabby and irresolute; expressive of weakness under possibility of strength. He hung loosely on his limbs, with knees bent, and stooping attitude; in walking he rather shuffled than decisively stept; and a lady once remarked, he never could fix which side of the garden walk would suit him best, but continually shifted in corkscrew fashion and kept trying both. A heavy-laden, high-aspiring, and surely much suffering man. His voice, naturally soft and good, had contracted itself into a painful snuffle and sing-song: he spoke as if preaching,—you would have said, preaching earnestly and also hopelessly the weightiest things. I still recollect his “object” and “subject,” terms of continual recurrence in the Kantean province; and how he sung and snuffled them into “om-m-mject” and “sum-m-mject,” with a kind of solemn shake or quaver, as he rolled along.” He died, as we have said, in 1834.

There are four aspects under which Samuel Taylor Coleridge presents himself to our gaze:—those of poet, philosopher, critic, and conversationalist. Our glance at him in these capacities must be very hurried. The perusal of Coleridge’s poetry is singularly suggestive of the idea of stupendous powers, never exerted to their full extent, and never applied to objects fully worthy of their might. To paint with delicate exactness, until the mimicry produces a titillating delight; to evoke visions from dreamland, and present them, dressed in the gaudy tinsel of fancy, to the eye of ennui-stricken maiden, demanding no effort of thought, inspiring no new and nobler life; such may have been the attempts of some, whom it would be deemed hard to exclude from the confines of Parnassus; but such we must esteem a desecration of poetry, and such could never have been the poetry of Coleridge. To flash new

light upon the destiny of man, and to kindle his eye with light from heaven, must ever constitute the true mission of the poet; and to this alone could Coleridge, fully and finally, have devoted his powers.

But to these objects, it cannot be said that he ever, in full measure, devoted them. He has done much; but we are profoundly sensible that he might have done more. Strains of softest, gentlest melody he has left us, strains which will sound in the ears of the latest generations; the gift he bestowed upon his country was precious and marvellous. Yet might not the Titanic powers to which they bear witness have drawn new notes of grandeur from the great unwritten epic of human history, have thrown new and brighter light on the ways of God to man, have spread out a new auroral banner to illumine man's destiny, and lead him nearer to the celestial country? In his youth he schemed an epic, which might have set him on the same starry pinnacle with Milton; but it was his fate to scheme, while Milton, heroic in every fibre, accomplished.

We shall notice, and that but most cursorily, only four of Coleridge's poems: "Religious Musings," "The Ancient Mariner," "Christabel," and "Love."

In the Pickering edition of 1844, the date affixed to the "Religious Musings" is Christmas Eve, 1794. If this is correct, the piece was composed when its author was a dragoon; but Cottle asserts it to have been written at a later period. We are inclined, however, to suspect, that the latter has confounded subsequent revision and addition, with original production. At all events, it was a juvenile effort, and truly it was a mighty one. All through it, there glows the white heat of a noblest and holiest enthusiasm; its tempestuous rapture reminds you of Homer. Some passages gleam with a Miltonic grandeur and sublimity;

and the marvellous power with which the poet spreads his vivifying enthusiasm all over nature, is unsurpassed.

The magnificent personifications with which this poem abounds, are perhaps its distinguishing characteristic. The power of personification, we regard as one of the truest and severest tests of poetic genius; and among modern poets Coleridge and Shelley are probably its greatest masters. As a specimen of the ability of the former in this way, and also as a characteristic extract from the poem of which we speak, we quote the following lines; our readers will recollect Coleridge's early political views, and the excitement of the French Revolution:—

“ Yet is the day of retribution nigh ;  
The Lamb of God hath open'd the fifth sea  
And upward rush on swiftest wing of fire  
The innumerable multitude of Wrongs  
By man on man inflicted ! Rest awhile,  
Children of wretchedness ! The hour is nigh :  
And lo ! the great, the rich, the mighty Men,  
The Kings and the chief Captains of the World,  
With all that fix'd on high like stars of Heaven  
Shot baleful influence, shall be cast to earth,  
Vile and down-trodden, as the untimely fruit  
Shook from the fig-tree by a sudden storm.  
Even now the storm begins ; each gentle name,  
Faith and meek Piety, with fearful joy  
Tremble far off — for lo ! the giant Frenzy,  
Uprooting empires with his whirlwind arm,  
Mocketh high Heaven ; burst hideous from the cell  
Where the old Hag, unconquerable, huge,  
Creation's eyeless drudge, black Ruin, sits,  
Nursing the impatient earthquake.”

That “giant Frenzy,” we are inclined to pronounce the finest personification in the whole compass of modern

poetry; and we are not sure that two such figures as this, and “creation’s eyeless drudge, black Ruin,” are to be found, in an equally short space, in any poem that ever was written. And this was composed ere Coleridge was twenty-five.

The “Ancient Mariner” is one of the most wonderful products of modern times. So much has been said of it, that little need now be added. It is a vivid and awful phantasmagoria, of weird mystery and terrific sublimity. A vision of wildest grandeur, which passed before the poet’s ecstatic eye, it was cast into poetic unity by the vivifying power of imagination, and limned forth by the poetic hand in magical and meteoric tints, to the rivetted eyes of all men. Its graphic power is absolutely wonderful; and we need only remind our readers what an important element of poetic effect this is. What other men *hear* of the poet *sees*; in the intense glow of poetic rapture, annihilating time and space, he gazes one moment into the flames of Tophet, and the next upon the crowns of the Seraphim; what other men speak of, he paints. It is perhaps the mingling of awe, and mystery, and wildest imagining, with terrific distinctness of picturing, that makes the spell, which this poem throws over the reader, so irresistible. What a picture is this:—

“The upper air burst into life!  
And a hundred fire-flags sheen;  
To and fro they were hurried about!  
And to and fro, and in and out,  
The wan stars danced between.  
  
And the coming wind did roar more loud,  
And the sails did sigh like sedge;  
And the rain poured down from one black cloud;  
The moon was at its edge.

The thick black cloud was cleft, and still  
 The moon was at its side ;  
 Like waters shot from some high crag,  
 The lightning fell with never a jag,  
 A river steep and wide."

Those wan stars, that black cloud with the moon at its edge, and that river of lightning, make up surely one of the most terrific landscapes ever conceived or portrayed. What a still and awful sublimity, too, is there in these lines :—

" Still as a slave before his lord,  
 The ocean hath no blast ;  
*His great bright eye most silently*  
*Up to the moon is cast.*"

If, again, we consider the imagery of the poem, we find it also perfect :—

" Day after day, day after day,  
 We stuck, nor breath nor motion ;  
 As idle as a painted ship  
 Upon a painted ocean."

The inexpressible beauty and appropriateness of this image were never surpassed.

And does not the heart thrill with the aerial melody, and serene loveliness, of these so simple lines ?

" It ceased ; yet still the sails made on  
 A pleasant noise till noon,  
 A noise like of a hidden brook  
 In the leafy month of June,  
 That to the sleeping woods all night  
 Singeth a gentle tune."

But we can particularize the beauties of this poem no

farther. We regard it as one of the most wondrous phantasmagorias, one of the most marvellous pieces of imaginative painting, to be met with in ancient or modern poetry.

“Christabel” is a production by itself. Coleridge wrote no other piece like it, and no man but Coleridge ever could have written it. The idea of satanic enmity and malice, under the garb of angelic innocence and beauty, seems to have been much present to the mind of Coleridge. Geraldine, and the fiend lady beautiful and bright, are personifications of the same thought; and it is one of chilliest horror. We give no excerpts from “Christabel;” its most striking passages have been quoted numberless times. The blending of undefined mystery and awe, with the most vivid bodying forth of each portrait in the picture, and the most delicate minuteness in laying on the tints, perhaps distinguish it as a poem.

We lack words to speak our admiration of Coleridge’s poem called “Love.” Its melody rolls trancingly over the soul, raising unutterable emotions; its gentle but mighty enthusiasm, calm as a cloudless summer noon, wraps the whole being in an atmosphere of rapture; its ideally beautiful painting laughs at our power of admiration. There are a few pieces in our language which stand apart from all others, in unapproached, inexhaustible loveliness: among these we place Milton’s “Allegro” and “Il Penseroso,” Shelley’s “Cloud,” and Coleridge’s “Love.” Our readers, of course, all know it; but we must once more recall to their minds its serenely beautiful commencement:—

“ All thoughts, all passions, all delights,  
Whatever stirs this mortal frame,  
All are but ministers of Love,  
And feed his sacred flame.

Oft in my waking hours do I  
Live o'er again that happy hour,  
When midway on the mount I lay,  
Beside the ruin'd tower.

The moonshine, stealing o'er the scene,  
Had blended with the lights of eve;  
And she was there, my hope, my joy—  
My own dear Genevieve!"

The pieces we have mentioned are the most wonderful efforts of Coleridge. We have been able to do little more than refer to them as proofs of his gigantic powers, without, in any adequate measure, analyzing or displaying their beauties.

Of Coleridge, as philosopher and critic, we cannot speak, save in the briefest terms. The "Friend," the "Aids to Reflection," the "Biographia Literaria," and the "Method," are his leading contributions to criticism and philosophy. We shall not characterize them separately. They abound in profound wisdom and practical insight; a collection of aphorisms might be made from them, we venture to say, embodying all, or almost all, the great truths, religious, moral, and political, whose proclamation constitutes the spiritual advancement and attainment of the nineteenth century; their style is on all hands considered one of the most perfect of models. Of his distinction between the reason and the understanding, which was the keystone of his philosophy, and which has so widely influenced philosophic thought in our century; and of his distinction between the imagination and the fancy, to which critics have been so much beholden, we shall say nothing. Their importance may be very great; they may have led to new and rich fields of thought; but we are very far from thinking that it is by estimating their precise value, that a correct or adequate

idea of the influence which Coleridge has exerted, and the work he has done, is to be obtained. It is in the spiritual impulse which he communicated to British thought; in the new earnestness and elevated enthusiasm with which he inspired the noblest spirits of our age; in the new life which he kindled in thousands of hearts, that the extent and magnitude of his influence are to be seen. From his works, in their whole range, comes a mild but powerful influence, purging the soul of earthliness, turning the eye heavenward, and nerving the arm to noblest endeavor; while mammonism, selfishness, and baseness, like spectres and night-birds at the morning strains of Memnon, are startled and flee away. To perform this work in our gold-worshipping age, Coleridge seems pre-eminently to have been missioned by the Most High. And when the reader conceives to himself the effect of this, in its thousandfold ramifications, through our families, our churches, and our literary schools, to trace which is at present impossible for us, he will agree with us in thinking the work of Coleridge a far extending and mighty work.

To Coleridge's conversational powers, allusion has already been made. On all hands they have been recognized as wonderful; but there has been an important difference of opinion regarding them. Mr. Carlyle, in the work from which we have already quoted, says: — “I have heard Coleridge talk, with eager musical energy, two stricken hours, his face radiant and moist, and communicate no meaning whatever to any individual of his hearers — certain of whom, I for one, still kept eagerly listening in hope,” etc. The importance of this is very great, and its weight cannot, by any means, be entirely nullified. It is difficult for any reader of Carlyle to believe, or even conceive, that, in any such case, his earnest and fiery eye would not see into

the heart of what matter there was. But we must listen to another authority on the subject, which will also be recognized as of weighty import, that of Mr. De Quincey;—“Coleridge, to many people, and often I have heard the complaint, seemed to wander; and he seemed then to wander the most, when, in fact, his resistance to the wandering instinct was greatest, viz., when the compass and huge circuit by which his illustrations moved, travelled farthest into remote regions, before they began to revolve. Long before this coming round commenced, most people had lost him, and naturally enough supposed that he had lost himself. They continued to admire the separate beauty of the thoughts, but did not see their relations to the dominant theme. . . . I can assert, upon my long and intimate knowledge of Coleridge’s mind, that logic, the most severe, was as inalienable from his modes of thinking as grammar from his language.”

Under the shield of De Quincey, we venture to suggest, that the practical energy of Carlyle, and the fact that long and subtle trains of abstract speculation are not congenial to his mind, may afford a solution of the circumstance, that he failed to discover order or continuity of argument, where, to the more practised metaphysical intellect of De Quincey, all was beautifully and emphatically perspicuous.

We have finished our cursory survey of the life and works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Around his career are glories as of empyrean light; and sorrows that might draw tears from the Seraphim. Of kind and gentle nature, and by constitution and early education ill adapted for the sore buffetings of the life-battle, his intellectual vision was wide as that of the eagle, and piercing as that of the lynx; his love of nature was deep and delicate as a Naiad’s that has dwelt forever by a fountain in the silent wood;

his youth was bright, and radiant with the beams of promise; his intellectual prowess, in its full expansion, was gazed on with dumb astonishment; while, in beautiful union with this, was a fantastic, almost childish playfulness and geniality of heart. His religion, despite the sad anomaly in his character, and the baleful influence of the power under whose magic he lay, we must, from the whole spirit of his writings, from the deep devotion of his private letters, and from the agonized struggle of his life, declare to have been profound and all-pervasive. In a fatal hour, he quaffed the enchanting draught of opium, and there was not enough of rugged vigor in his soul to break the spell; henceforward it was as if the spirit of an eagle was closed in the heart of a dove. We image him to ourselves as a desert-born steed, with hoofs to outrun the wind, and eyes to outgleam the lightning, but smitten, at the bright morning hour, by the withering Samiel, and thenceforward staggering, with eye dimmed and limbs tottering, along the burning sand.

## V.

### WELLINGTON.

AMONG the many wonderful phenomena of human history, war holds a prominent, if not the most prominent, place; in the web of human destiny, it has marked itself by a deep and continuous stain of red; it has directed every national development, it has called forth every human emotion, it has entered into the composition of every language. It is, withal, a phenomenon whose meaning is extremely difficult to read, and of which, we must make bold to say, the readings have been extremely unsatisfactory.

To discern that war is essentially an evil, demands no singular amount, and no extraordinary exercise, of penetration. The fair Earth that smiles daily to the sun, decked in flowery garlands by the hand of Summer, might surely serve a nobler end than to be the dwelling-place of self-extirminating beings; the lordly rivers, wandering through stately champaigns, and, like beneficent queens, scattering rich bounties around them, were surely not designed to be reddened and thickened by the gore of brother men; the mountains that rise so grandly to meet the glance of Morn, were surely not set there to flash back that glance from the bristling line of steel; the soft, luxuriant plains of Ceres and Flora were surely destined finally to some higher object than to be the battle-fields of Bellona and Mars. War, it

must be allowed, is a relic of chaos and old night. But let us not imagine that this is the whole truth concerning it; its source leads us back to the unfathomable mysteries, but its history is not utterly inexplicable, and its actings are not by any means simply malign. Let it be granted that human history bears unquestionable evidence of some fearful taint, of some fatal curse; let it be recognized that the path of the generations has been over a burning marl, which would not become the pavement of heaven, and war becomes explicable. It has not been all in vain that the generations have ever marched to battle music: the car of *Civilization* has dripped with blood; those throes and throbings which mark every new birth of society have been wars.

The great event which has given tone and color to the history of our time, and without a knowledge of which it is impossible to understand the nineteenth century, is the first French Revolution. It was the last great awakening of the European intellect; as every other such awakening, it was followed by wars:—

“For all the past of Time reveals  
A bridal dawn of thunder peals  
Wherever Thought hath wedded Fact.”

We venture the assertion, that the character of these wars has been very widely misconceived. Mr. Carlyle, alluding to them, and to Pitt as one of their chief movers, exclaims:—"The result of all which, what was it? Elderly men can remember the tar barrels burnt for success and thrice immortal victory in the business, and yet what result had we? The French Revolution, a Fact decreed in the Eternal Councils, could not be put down," etc. We shall not stay to ask how it came that the "Eternal Councils" ceased

to act when Pitt came upon the stage, and allowed that singular puppet to cut the threads of destiny and play his part in independence of them; we shall merely remark, that, to our thinking, the Eternal Councils, or, as we shall prefer saying, the hand of the Christian God, was as manifest in the wars as in the revolution. The time was not yet come for democracy; it was destined that the fire which threatened to gird the world should, for the time, be quenched, and nature did not grudge a deep deluge of blood for the purpose. Were there no other end attained by these wars than to prove, in the groans and thunders of battle, that it was not the doctrine of Voltaire that was to renovate the world—that the light in which the nations were to rejoice was not to shine from the saloons of philosophism—it were enough to demonstrate their supervision and direction by the eye of Providence. To use a figure suggested by Shakspeare, the tree of humanity had to be lanced, and lanced fearfully, at least once more, ere it reached its final glory and beauty.

The lions of democracy arose in wild fury; they were then yoked in glad submission to the car of their emperor, and would have drawn him in triumph, like the god of old, around the world; but an instrument was raised up and duly fitted to dash him from his seat, and to send him to his lonely isle. Upon both of these from the first rested the eye of God. The name of the one was Napoleon: the other was that dauntless, calm, and stately hero, over whose tomb, with a tear of pride, and not of sorrow, Britannia now weeps.

Arthur Wellesley, the Duke of Wellington, was born in Ireland in the year 1769. Both the precise locality and the precise date of the event have been disputed; we think the writer of the biography which appeared in the *Times*

has established that the month was April, and rendered it at least extremely probable that the place was Dublin. By original extraction he was English, but a naturalization of more than two centuries had rendered the family from which he sprung thoroughly Irish. In the same year which witnessed the arrival of Wellington in our world, there was another little boy born in Ajaccio; he was ushered into the world on a piece of tapestry, embroidered with scenes from the Iliad; they called him Napoleon. Arthur Wellesley received his military education at Angers, in France. In the year 1787, he received his commission as ensign in the 73d infantry regiment. In the boyhood of Wellington there occurred nothing deserving mention.

Strangely enough, it was in Belgium that Arthur Wellesley served his first campaign. There he received his first practical military lesson, in its rugged sternness, little dreaming that there lay the commencement of that training, which, on these very plains, was to result in his becoming the envy and admiration of the world. The campaign was extremely disastrous to Great Britain, and extremely profitable to her future hero. Of many great generals, and, with emphasis, of Napoleon himself, it might be said that victory is their ruin. The feeling of danger and the sounds of battle brace their nerves, and clear their intellectual vision; but the sound of a world's applause intoxicates and maddens them; thinking to shake the spheres, they suddenly find that they are mortal, and fall headlong. But of Wellington, and the whole class of generals which he represented, it may be truly said, that every mistake is worth a triumph, every defeat worth a victory. It was so in the case of Wellesley's first campaign. He saw there, in the most striking illustration, the combined action of defective organization, inefficient commissariat, and miser-

able equipment; he saw, in a word, the operation of all those errors and evils which are born of incapacity; and he witnessed their result—disgrace and destruction. Performing, in his subordinate position, all that clearness of vision and energetic action could effect; seizing every error or reverse, and making it “vassal unto” wisdom; he served a very valuable apprenticeship to his profession in this Belgium campaign which fell in the end of 1794 and the beginning of 1795.

In the beginning of the year 1797, Colonel Wellesley arrived at Calcutta; a short time afterwards, his brother, Lord Mornington, was placed at the head of the Indian government. The main features of his character were now distinctly perceptible. An intellect of uncommon clearness, comprehension, and vigor, was ruled and directed by a prevailing and ardent devotion to war; a calm but sleepless energy, in alliance with a penetrating intellect, searched every circumstance to its root, unravelled every complexity, and carefully stored every fragment of knowledge, which bore on the theory or practice of his profession; cheerfulness among friends, and reserve in general society, masked a soul whose power necessitated its internal working. In person, he is represented as having been handsome and soldier-like; the light in his eye was steady and piercing; an occasional abstraction and impatience indicated the fiery energy that was in want of a world to conquer. By accident or intention, he passed a few weeks at Madras, soon after his arrival in India; the period was short, but it was sufficient to enable him to acquire an accurate and comprehensive acquaintance with the affairs of the presidency, and the warlike capacities of the Carnatic. The time soon came when it was to avail him much.

Wellington's campaigns in India were three. The first

was against Tippoo Sultaun, the dreaded ruler of Mysore; the second was the arduous, but somewhat amusing, chase and destruction of Dhoondiah Waugh, the robber of the Mahratta hills; the third was the glorious campaign of Assaye, which rivalled the renown of Plassey, and continued one of the brightest blazons on the shield of Wellington. We shall concern ourselves but slightly with the first two; Assaye deserves a longer notice.

The campaign against Tippoo, in which Wellesley served in a subordinate capacity, ended with the capture of Ser-ingapatam and the death of its former possessor. This took place in the summer of 1799. Colonel Wellesley was appointed to the government of the place, and a very extensive jurisdiction assigned him. His discharge of the duties thus imposed is strongly illustrative of his character, and formed a very important part of that education which produced the fortifier of Torres Vedras and the conqueror of Waterloo. To our great general we may very emphatically apply the fine and pointed remark of Sallust concerning Jugurtha—"Sane, quod difficillimum in primis est, et prælio strenuus erat, et bonus consilio"—his sound and massive strength availed him alike in camp and cabinet. Even at this early stage of his career, he displayed a comprehensiveness which could administer the affairs of provinces, and a minute accuracy which could investigate the most intricate or insignificant detail of currency. Into every department of the administration he introduced efficiency; the affairs of the provinces over which he ruled soon wore an improved aspect; and the gratitude and applause of those over whom his sway extended rewarded his efforts.

The long chase which issued in the slaughter of Dhoondiah and the dispersion of his followers, is of too small

importance to detain us; but an incident which marked its close deserves notice. In the camp of the robber chieftain was found his little son, aged four years, and they brought him to Wellesley. He treated the child with tender kindness, protected him while he remained in India, and, on leaving for England, committed a considerable sum of money to the care of Colonel Symmonds for the use of the boy. The act was kindly and beautiful; it rests upon his early laurels like a sunbeam. The campaign against Dhoondiah took place in 1800; Wellesley was created major-general in 1802.

The battle of Assaye was one of the boldest and most brilliant ever fought by Wellington. The campaign originated in the antagonism of two great powers, between which lay the contest for the possession of India—the Mahrattas, of the west, and the British, whose territories lay principally to the north and east. The Mahrattas were a powerful and warlike people, who had successfully resisted the empire of the Great Mogul. Against the British power, three of their mightiest chiefs contended—Scindiah, Holcar, and the Rajah of Berar. Their force was formidable and imposing. By his experience in other campaigns, however, Wellesley knew well the conditions of an Indian war; of the country, in its every feature, he had the most intimate knowledge; and he had formed a correct idea of the power of the British soldier.

To comprehend clearly the various aspects and movements of the battle of Assaye, is not a very simple matter; what picture we have ourselves formed of it in our own mind, we shall endeavor to present to our readers.

The Kaitna, a small branch of the great Godavery river, which rises in the north-west of the peninsula of Hindostan and flows south-east, runs from west to east. On its north-

ern bank is the village of Assaye, and, some small distance to the west of that place, the village or station of Bokerdun. It was posted on the northern bank of this stream that General Wellesley, advancing from the south, descried, on the 23d of September, 1803, the combined forces of Scindiah and the Rajar of Berar, in number about 50,000, with an immense park of artillery. The British force did not number 5000 men. The right of the enemy's position was at Bokerdun—it was occupied by cavalry; their left, consisting of infantry, extended along the banks of the stream towards Assaye. Wellesley determined to attack the infantry. To accomplish this, he wheeled to the right, and marched along the southern bank of the Kaitna, until he passed their left. The enemy's cavalry came pouring from its position on their right, and was opposed by the Mahratta and Mysore horse in the British interest. His rear and flanks thus protected, Wellesley succeeded in crossing the river to the left of the enemy. He at once formed his men into three lines, of which the last was cavalry; facing towards the west, they advanced; the 78th Highlanders were kept in reserve. The confederate Mahrattas had watched these movements with an interest which may well be conceived. They saw the British cross the stream beyond their left flank, and perceived, with an apprehension quickened by the sense of terrific danger, that their left would be taken in flank, and rolled back in utter ruin. Their position was untenable, and an instant alteration was imperative. With a swiftness and regularity to be imputed to French assistance, they effected it. They drew their infantry from the banks of the Kaitna, and flung it across the space between the stream and Assaye, with its left strongly posted on the village; it once more looked the British in the face. In this line, and in great strength

about Assaye, were the enemy's guns. As the British line advanced, they received a raking and murderous fire; the guns of Wellesley were at once silenced; and the 74th and the piquets of infantry on the right, advancing against the left of the enemy, were frightfully hewn up. It must have been a spectacle of fearful but dazzling splendor. Under the fervid Indian sun, those slender lines, the faint noise of whose artillery was swallowed in the tremendous roar of that of the enemy, advanced with determined step against the turbaned ranks, a hundred cannon emptying their Cerberean throats upon them, and vast multitudes of the foe before. In their guns there was no safety and no hope. What then remained? One stern hope was left—the word was given—"Fix bayonets!" At once, along the thin red lines, through the darkening smoke, the steel gleamed out. On swept the British in the teeth of the great guns; on to victory. The eye never opened on the plains of Bengal, or the Ghauts of Himmalaya, that could bide the glitter of the cold British steel; the vast masses were shattered and dissipated, and the horsemen of Berar, that had rushed on the torn infantry of our right, were dashed back, as a cloud by a tornado, by the British cavalry. The latter then advanced upon the broken infantry, trampling it down and scattering it abroad. The battle was won; but there still was danger. The numbers of the enemy were so great, that it was impossible for the small British force to face them all at once; the Mahratta gunners, moreover, when the British bayonets advanced, had in many instances lain down as if dead, by their guns; and as soon as the British, by continuing their advance, left the ground clear, they rose and reloaded their pieces. One large body of the enemy's infantry formed again; but Lieutenant-Colonel Maxwell charged with the horse, and

broke their ranks; their whole army then dissipated, leaving ninety pieces of cannon in the hands of the British. One of the most brilliant victories in the annals of war was over.

The defeated chieftains gathered their squadrons once more on the plains of Argaum, but were totally routed.

In February, 1805, our general left India; after a career where swift energy and dauntless valor in the field, threw a rare and beautiful lustre over moderation, firmness, and wisdom in the cabinet; where his strong natural genius had been practised and ripened; where he had earned the admiration and esteem as well of the subjects of his administration, as of his brethren in the field; and whence he came, a Knight Companion of the Order of the Bath, after having received the thanks of both houses of parliament, and with the first wreath of victory about his brow. He had secured his country in possession of the richest and goodliest conquest under the sun; he came to establish her throne among the nations at home.

We shall not trace minutely the career of Wellington between the campaigns of India and those of the Peninsula. In November, 1805, he served as chief of brigade in Denmark; returning thence, he commanded for some time at Hastings; in April, 1807, he was named chief secretary for Ireland; in August of the same year, he served with distinction in the Copenhagen campaign; and, about the middle of 1808, he was appointed to command a force destined for the Peninsula.

The first campaign which Wellesley served in Portugal is extremely interesting. In it he acquired that knowledge of the affairs of the Peninsula which enabled him finally to conquer; in it he first demonstrated to the world that there were soldiers who could meet the bravest legions of

the restless emperor, and that there was a general who could lead them. He received the news of his appointment to the command with what, in him, we might almost call exultant delight, and wrote to Lord Hill, with whom he had formerly served, expressing the hope that they would have more to do than had been the case last time. His wakeful and minute circumspection was displayed in the arrangement, provisioning, and equipment of the troops; his energy struck life into the whole enterprise. Sailing before the fleet which contained his army, he instituted a series of investigations and conducted them with singular success. Every reader of the immortal despatches of Wellington must, we think, be struck with admiring astonishment, as he perceives with what rapidity their author, amid all the darkness and complexity of the subject, comprehended, at this time, and mastered his whole position. The possibilities of the contest and the conditions of success were at once before him. The French were strong in Portugal, and held Lisbon; but Lisbon might be snatched from their grasp, and if it were once secured, the kingdom of Portugal could be defended against them. To win Lisbon then was the object of his first campaign; he attained it by a display of valor and ability which even contradiction and stupidity could but partly obscure. He landed his forces at Mondego Bay, and marched southward.

A new page was opening in the history of the French. Hitherto, since their revolution, they had rushed hither and thither, like rolling fires over the prairie, blasting and blackening wherever they came; no troops in Europe had stood before them. But a different set of men, under a new general, now landed on the shore of Portugal. In their rude island prejudice, they had scarcely sufficient originality to conceive the idea of fearing the French; it was almost

a part of their creed, that they could beat them, two or three to one. On the heights and in the defiles of Rolica they first met the veteran legions of Gaul, and swept them away; around Vimiero, though Junot, Leison, and De Laborde led on the French squadrons, they again hurled them back. In a few weeks the French army would have been destroyed, and Lisbon gloriously captured. But Wellesley had outrun his nation in knowledge, and the wisdom of his ideas could not be discerned. Sir Harry Burrard arrived to take the command; Sir Hew Dalrymple followed; instead of the ruin of the French army, there came the convention of Cintra. Such was the first campaign in the Peninsula. Sir Arthur soon returned home.

In his absence great and disastrous events took place. The little Corsican came himself into Spain. Gathering, by the swift might of his genius, the various divisions of his army into resistless bolts, he launched them at the various Spanish and British armies. The Spanish hosts were smitten into confusion and almost into annihilation, and the British, under Sir John Moore, who, whenever they crossed bayonets, vindicated their native valor, were driven back to their waves. The emperor appeared resistless; and though Lisbon was still in our hands, a deep feeling of hopelessness took possession of a large portion of the British nation. But all was not lost: Britain possessed one man who could command successfully in the Peninsula. He had already advanced far beyond his contemporaries in knowledge of the state of the seat of war and the circumstances of the enemy; the rare military genius with which nature had endowed him had been fully developed by experience, and had been oftentimes crowned with victory; he knew well the valor and strength of the British soldier; he was himself animated by that calm

dauntlessness which is born of deliberation and strength. To him, as her last hope, Britain confided her army for the conquest of the Peninsula. In the series of campaigns upon which he entered, he proved himself superior in warlike genius to every one of the great French marshals, and fitted himself to contend with him who was greater than them all.

To detail the various operations of the Peninsula campaigns, is manifestly here impossible; we must confine ourselves to a glance at one or two of their most brilliant passages of war. Ere proceeding to these, we shall endeavor, by a general survey of the difficulties with which he had to contend, to set in a fair light the genius and prowess of Wellington.

First of all, we must consider the foes he had to contend with. There were in Spain and Portugal about two hundred thousand French soldiers; men who had shaken Europe by their tread, whose eagles seemed to have been grasped by Victory and borne forward as her own. They were commanded by leaders who had attained their stations by force of military genius, and who had received their batons from the hand of the great military emperor. The fortresses of the kingdom were in their hands.

After these, the state of the Peninsula and of its inhabitants demands notice. The country was worn by long war, and the difficulties of communication were extreme. The condition of the inhabitants was deplorable. Concerning the Portuguese, some hope might be entertained. They were poor, and they had been beaten into national ague; but they were at heart brave, and were not quite impregnable to reason. The Spaniards, on the other hand, save by their irritating Guerilla warfare, were useless, or worse. It was only with the greatest difficulty that they

could be induced to sell provisions to the British; in the day of battle, they were either too obstinate to come into action, or too cowardly to stand their ground when once engaged; sometimes, particularly when defeat was certain, they flung away their armies with insane foolhardiness. Before the battle of Talavera, for instance, a united blow would have shattered a French army; but the Spaniards were as immovable as the Rock of Gibraltar; the opportunity being once irrecoverably lost, they did as those curs to which the English were once likened — rushed into the iron jaws of the French armies, and had themselves crushed like rotten apples. The sickening vexation and the substantial detriment which these Spaniards inflicted upon Wellington were incredible. In his own army, most important reforms were absolutely necessary to the hopeful prosecution of the war. The commissariat, especially, the full efficiency of which he speedily discovered to be indispensable, was in great disorder, and it was only by the utmost exertion of his organizing genius and his overwhelming energy that a change was effected.

But, in order to obtain a comprehensive view of the difficulties and entangling annoyances against which the British general had to contend, and over all which he rose in adamantine calmness, we must image to ourselves the strong opposition which had its seat at home. Like that ancient faction, which, by its plausible oratory and slimy serpentine malice, finally brought to the dust the great Carthaginian conqueror, the British opposition bent its energies, zealously and unremittingly, to thwart the conqueror of the Peninsula. They strove to cripple him by insufficient reinforcements; they underrated and misrepresented his victories; every retreat or temporary loss they magnified into a rout. Valiant in the unassailable assurance

of perfect ignorance, and flippant as currish stupidity always is, they stood behind the shield of public liberty, and uttered their vociferous criticisms upon the general's movements: it was the course of nature reversed—the lion had become provider for the jackals, and they would not on any account abate their inane howling, and allow him to do the work in silence. We can but faintly picture to ourselves the speechless disdain which would curl the lip of Wellesley, as he heard from afar the unmeasured condemnation of his most masterly movements by some atomic critic! When, under the guidance of an idea far beyond the utmost flight of critic wing, he marched toward the iron bulwarks of Torres Vedras, did the united howl of the opposing “we” produce only a smile, or did he burst into a regular guffaw? Had the howl been as uninfluential and harmless as it was foolish, it would assuredly have been the latter.

Let the reader calmly present to his mental gaze all this array of difficulties and hindrances, and form his judgment of their vanquisher accordingly. We must briefly note the conditions of the contest which rendered it at all hopeful. Wellington's first and firmest consolation was an indestructible and well-grounded reliance upon British steel. He soon learned, also, that the difficulty of maintaining communications, and the absence of any one commanding power, made it extremely difficult for the French to form great combinations. Portugal was defensible. He had the sea behind him securing provisions and promising reinforcements. It was early in the year 1809, that he again landed in Portugal.

Wellesley disembarked at Lisbon; he was enabled to head an army of about 25,000 men, including certain Portuguese forces under the command of Beresford. Into every part of the service fresh vigor was at once infused; the com-

missariat was put into efficient working condition; every necessary arrangement was made, every appointment attended to: and the British army, at length in the hand of one who could wield it, proceeded in ardor and confidence upon its career of conquest. Wellesley at once commenced his march to the north; took Oporto most brilliantly, and swiftly drove Soult out of Portugal. Turning then south-eastward, to act in Spain on the line of the Tagus, in co-operation with the Spanish General Cuesta, he fought the fierce and bloody battle of Talavera, against the combined forces of King Joseph and Marshal Victor. It was one of those battles of frequent occurrence in the Peninsula, in which, after a tremendous conflict, the enemy was beaten back, but where, from an inferiority in numbers, or a want of cavalry, the British were unable totally to dissipate them. As it was thus, so to speak, the type of a class, as it seems to admit of very distinct picturing, and as it illustrates well the glory and the sadness of war, we shall venture upon a brief description of it.

On the northern bank of the Tagus, in the Spanish province of New Castile, stands the town of Talavera; beyond it, to the northward, is a rugged plain, and at the distance of about two miles a hill, with a valley of some extent beyond. This plain was that chosen by Wellesley on which to post his army to oppose Victor; the hill, where his left rested, was the most important point in his position. His line looked towards the east, to face the French who advanced westward. On the right, resting on the town of Talavera, and in a position so secured by natural defences as to be almost unassailable, were posted the Spaniards; no dependence whatsoever could be placed upon them; the highest hope was, that they would not run, and might charge a broken column. The rest of the line was occupied by the British, their extreme left resting on the hill

we have mentioned. This hill, the key to the whole position, was of course the object of Victor's principal efforts.

On the 27th of July, 1809, the fighting commenced. It extended along the whole British line, but was severest on the left. At one moment here, on account of a temporary weakness, the flank was turned, and the French gained the summit of the ridge. But the valiant and true-hearted Hill rushed to the rescue with fresh troops, searched the ranks of the enemy with a withering volley, and then charged with the bayonet. The foe was hurled down the ridges, to return no more while the sun was above the horizon. The shadows fell over the Spanish hills, and the British lay down by their arms to wait for the morning. But Victor knew it to be of vital importance that he should win that hill. A feint attack was made upon another part of the British line, and, under cover of the darkness, the French advanced. Their very bravest came; but a foe as brave was awake and ready for them. Their dim lines drew nearer and nearer, until their eyes could be seen sparkling through the darkness by the silent British; then suddenly the stillness of the hills was broken by the echoing rattle of the British musketry, and the red tongues of flame, lighting up the lines of bayonets, fringed the skirts of Night with fire. Again and again did the French columns attempt to gain and hold the level ground on the top of the ridge, but the mangling hail came ever in ceaseless volleys from the unflinching British, and at length the levelled bayonet drove them down the hill-side. The French drew off, and both hosts snatched an hour or two of troubled repose; by five in the morning they were at the dread work again. The roar of cannon commenced at daybreak. The hill on the left was still the object of the enemy. Column after column advanced to the attack, and still with the same result.

They ascended the hill with that tried and disciplined valor which had won them so many fields; the British, in their immovable lines, eyed them as they advanced with calm, savage sternness; just as the enemy reached the ridge, they poured in their fire, and advancing with the bayonet, forced them back. So it continued until half-past eight in the morning, when the heat of the sun compelled the weary combatants to desist. Then occurred a most touching scene. There flowed a small stream towards the Tagus, along the British front, separating the armies. Thither, to draw water, the soldiers of both armies came. Ceasing for a moment to be teeth of the dragon War, they became individuals and brothers; they flung aside their warlike implements, chatted in friendly terms, lent each other what little aids could be administered, and mutually succored the wounded. In a few minutes the bugles called them to their ranks, they shook hands like friends, grasped the musket and the bayonet, and the only word between them was death. It was a strange and most melancholy, yet wildly beautiful spectacle.

The sternest fight of all followed. The main attack now was upon the centre; it was met, and most gallantly repulsed. But the guards, in an excess of ardor, advanced in slight disorder. The perfect discipline of the French enabled them at once to perceive and take advantage of the circumstance. They charged again; the guards were compelled to retire; the French batteries tore up their flanks as they drew back; and the German battalion, which occupied the ground to the left, was wavering. The victory seemed within the grasp of the French; but there was an eye beholding the whole from that hill on the left, an eye that seldom failed to discern the moment of necessity, and the mode of relief, the eye of Wellesley. He instantly

ordered up a regiment of infantry and a squadron of light cavalry, to charge the advancing French. With matchless valor and coolness, the difficult operation was executed; the foe was checked; the guards formed again behind, and charged with a cheer. An Irish regiment took up the huzza, and it went rolling to right and left along the British line. The islanders must have appeared somewhat incomprehensible to the French: shattered, mown down, fearfully thinned, they yet were in spirit to cheer; to tame them might well appear a hopeless task. The enemy retreated, and Talavera was won.

Wellesley, perhaps, equalled any general of ancient or modern times in the choice of positions. In care, in accuracy, in activity, he was a Fabius or a Scipio. He could detect, with a glance as swift as thought, the error of an opponent, as at Salamanca. These faculties are displayed in every part of the Peninsula campaigns; but on no occasion were the whole attributes of his genius called into such striking operation, or displayed in such imposing colors, as in the campaign of 1810, and the retreat on Torres Vedras. It was toward the end of this year, that Lord Wellington (for such he had been since Talavera), with the slow and stately motion of one who had counted every step, commenced his retreat towards Lisbon, before the overpowering columns of Massena. He had masked his great operation so skilfully, that the French marshal had no correct idea of the extent of the fortifications to which he was retreating, and boasted, with his nation's magniloquence, that he was to drive the English into the sea. It was proper to teach him, that the march was of quite a different nature from a flight. On the heights of Busaco, the British lion calmly faced about, refreshed himself with a deep draught of French blood, and then, proudly

arising, moved, with regal tread, towards his lair. Massena still vaunted. On he came over the muddy roads, now drenched by the rains, and through a country which had been stripped of everything by the strict command of Wellington. This clearing the country of all means of support for an army, was an essential part of the idea of the campaign; its purpose is obvious, and the object of Wellington would have been attained sooner than was the case, if the command had been duly obeyed. At length Massena came to a dead halt; the bulwarks of Torres Vedras were before him. He saw, to his utter astonishment, a fortified line extending from the Tagus to the ocean; mountains scarped, valleys spanned, inundations prepared; the whole bristling with cannon. He gazed and gazed, in blank amazement, for three days; he found the lines impregnable. Had he forced the first, there was a second, and even a third, to be surmounted. At length, in savage, sardonic calmness, the British lion had lain down, backed by his native ocean, and gazed grimly over the vast squadrons. His growl would now be given through the throats of six hundred cannon. "You were to drive me into the sea, I think,—Come on!"

In due time Wellington left his lines, Massena rolling back before him. The French and their emperor now began distinctly to perceive, that once the British general had laid his iron grasp upon Portugal, there was no might of theirs which could make him relax it. We shall not follow him in his path of struggle and victory. The campaign of 1811 was signalized by the fierce but glorious fighting of Fuentes d'Onoro; that of 1812 was particularly rich, boasting both the celebrated sieges of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajos, and the tremendous blow of Salamanca; at length, in 1813, he totally dissipated the French forces at

Vittoria, and encountered Soult among the Pyrenees. In 1814, after the magnificent accomplishment of the great task which had once appeared hopeless, he sheathed his sword at Toulouse. All that array of difficulties and toils had been smitten and subdued by the might of his valor and genius; those proud armies had been humbled; in no single battle had he been vanquished; and, dazzled by the beams of his glory, even his factious detractors had been silenced.

We now draw towards the end of that great martial drama which we have been briefly contemplating. While Wellington was marching upon France, with the armies of Napoleon in retreat before him, the nations of the north were closing in upon their great master. When the ducal coronet had been placed upon Wellington's brow and the marshal's baton put into his hand, after the great triumph of Vittoria, the contest in the north was still doubtful, although the scale of Napoleon seemed steadily rising; when the last blow was dealt at Toulouse, the sceptre and the sword had fallen from his grasp. They sent him to Elba, and Europe snatched a few moments of restless repose, while huge armies, not yet disbanded, lay like nightmares on its troubled bosom. But the end had not yet come; the thunders were to awake once more, ere the azure of peace was to smile over Europe. Suddenly it was awakened, as by a red bolt of fire passing across the sky: Napoleon had burst his chains, and was again at the head of his armies. And now the two extraordinary men, who had been born in the same year, and who had, from the first, been destined to meet, were finally to close in the wrestle of death. Once more the wild Celtic vehemence and valor, under a leader of mighty but kindred genius, were to come into conflict with the still, indomitable

strength of the Teutons, under a leader whose overwhelming powers were all masked in calmness. We must omit all preliminaries, and endeavor to gaze upon the great contest itself.

After various passages of war, the two hosts lay facing each other on the heights of Waterloo; the French were posted on one ridge, the British on another, and there were several important posts of defence between them. The dim morning of the memorable 18th of June, 1815, looked down upon the British squares on the one hill-side, and the vast masses of French cavalry and infantry on the opposing heights; in the valley between them, Summer had spread out a rye-field: ere evening, it was to be trodden flat, and welded together by human gore.

It is a common enough remark in the present day, that the modern battle lacks the interest and sublimity of the ancient one: mechanically, it is said, you shoot, and mechanically you are shot at; the wild fire that lit the eye of an Achilles can gleam no more; the shattering sway of the one strong arm has ceased to be of account in the day of battle; give us the fiery melee of the olden time, in which a Hector could mingle, and of which a Homer could sing. Is it, then, so superlatively and exclusively noble and difficult, to deal the stern blow, when the nerves are strung by the animal excitement of the combat, and the enthusiasm is raised by the presence and justling of the foe? And is it nothing to gaze, unflinching, upon the slow, steady advance of the column, from which the eye of Death is calmly glaring? Is that deliberate determination of small account, by which death, whether it comes in the shattering cannon ball, or the tearing musket bullet, or the cold bayonet stab, is chosen before flight or surrender? We declare, without hesitation, that the modern battle is a grander spectacle

than was the ancient : around no Homeric battle was there ever such a terrific sublimity as there hung around the field of Waterloo. Napoleon did not, with bared arm, rush into the midst of the combatants, trusting to his single prowess. Wellington did not, heading with musket and bayonet the onward charge, expose his bosom to the steel. But did ever an Achilles or an Attila avail so much in the day of battle, as that dark-browed Corsican, or that calm, clear-eyed Briton ? Each remained apart, wielding the tremendous mechanism of war, mightier than the very gods of Homer. And had the valor which they wielded become mechanism, had human heroism no place in that field ? Let us look upon it, and see. Under the fitting drapery of jagged and trailing clouds, which seemed weeping over the fearful scene, stood a certain number of little squares, ranged on the slope of a valley ; toil-worn they were, drenched with rain, and few in number, on the bleak hill-side. On the ridges to which, with dauntless eye, they looked, were ranged three hundred cannon ; from all their throats, through the long and weary hours, was poured forth the shower of iron, tearing and shattering those little squares, winnowing their ranks with a tempest of death. And whenever the mangling shot had done its work, and a gap yawned, on dashed the lancers or cuirassiers, as the ocean dashes on the rock riven of the thunderbolt. Yet it was all in vain. The roar of death from those three hundred cannon-throats they heard undismayed; the gleam of the lances and the glittering of the cuirasses, as the horsemen dashed out from the cloudy smoke, with Death upon their plumes, they eyed unswerving. Hour after hour rolled heavily away, and the patient Earth, with all her summer burden, wheeled on to the east. The squares dwindled, and several united into one ; the arm was grow-

ing heavy, the scent of blood filled the air, the ground was fattening with human gore; yet they yielded not. In silence they closed up their ranks, as brother after brother fell, a mangled corpse; with the earnest prayer of agony, they implored to be led against the foe: but yield they never would; the car of Death might crush them into the ground, but it was only so that a path could be made. Stern or nobler valor never fought round windy Troy.

“ O proud Death,  
What feast was toward in thine eternal cell ! ”

From noon until eve those cannon had roared, and squadron after squadron of horsemen had poured upon those squares; and now, as the shades of a gloomy evening were beginning to fall, the fight was ever becoming the sterner, and the light in that dark fiery eye, which directed the French columns, the more wild and agitated. Once more as if by a tremendous effort to wrest the sceptre from Destiny, an attempt was to be made by Napoleon. His old guard yet remained. They loved him as children love their father; they had received from his hand the wreaths of honor and victory; some of them had followed him to the flames of Moscow; on some of them had risen the sun of Austerlitz; and now for that dear master they were to go against those unconquerable squares. Beyond them lay fame, and honor, and victory; to yield a foot was destruction and despair. Slowly, under the rolling smoke of those great guns, they advanced, with the firm tread of men whose nerves had long been strung to the music of battle: we shall not liken them to tornado or thunder cloud; there is no spectacle so fearful to man as the calm, determined advance of thousands of his brothers to the strife of death. Let the brave have their due! The old guard advanced most gallantly;

but they were ploughed up, as they approached, by the British artillery, and a murderous fire from the unquivering British arm searched their ranks as they endeavored to deploy; valiantly did they attempt it, but it was in vain. Torn and mangled by that terrible fire, they wavered; in a moment the British horsemen dashed into their ranks, and rolled them backwards in wild confusion. All was won on the one side, and all was lost on the other. Who can tell the feeling of serene and complete satisfaction which then filled the breast of Wellington! And, ah! who can image to himself the dread moment when thick clouds rushed over the fire of that imperial eye, whose lightnings were to smite the towers of Earth no more! Lo! mid the thickening dusk, while the cheer of another host comes on the gale, the shattered squares have opened into line. At last, the bayonets glittering afar in the cloudy air, they sweep down the ridges to victory. For a moment Napoleon saw the long line, as it came on like the rolling simoom; Shakspeare could not have voiced his emotions at the sight. And he passed away to his lonely rock in the sea, to exhibit the sublimest spectacle of modern times, whose deathless sorrow could be sung by no harp but that of the melancholy ocean.

Now was the time when the genuine and lofty manhood of our mighty Wellington displayed itself. He had reached the highest pinnacle of fame, the eye of Europe was fixed upon him, and his grateful country exhausted in his behoof her storehouse of honor and reward. It is such moments that try men. The towering Andes, with the serene air of the upper heavens about their brows, present us with two phenomina: to those solitudes of the pathless sky, by the force of wind and the tumults of the lower atmosphere, are borne the smallest insects; in those serene solitudes,

in the full flood of the undimmed sunshine, floats the condor. The difference between the two is marked. The insects, borne aloft by external, and not by internal strength, are tossed hither and thither in the thin air, with their little pinions tattered, and their little senses bewildered; the condor, with outspread fans, rests upon the liquid ether as his native element, whither nature had designed him to ascend. The phenomena are replete with meaning to the eye of wisdom. By popular applause, by confusion and turmoil, the human insect is often borne for a time aloft, to be dashed about and to fall; the man who, rising far over his fellows, and basking in the full beams of glory and victory, rests there placid and immovable as the condor, is a true and mighty son of nature. His strength is from within. So, most emphatically, it was with Wellington; the world's applause did not quicken a pulse in his frame, or flutter, for a moment, his calm and manly intellect.

In connection with this part of the career of Wellington, there is one name which we cannot pass over; if not an actual spot in the sun of his glory, it is at least a faint mist which has obscured it. That name is Ney. We must confess a very strong wish that Wellington had done his utmost to save Ney. To say he was not required to do it by justice, or even by honor, is probably to assert a fact; but it is virtually to admit the absence of a satisfactory plea. Why talk of the iron rod of justice or the cold code of honor here; hath mercy no golden sceptre to extend to the vanquished? How beautiful, as he returned resistless from the field, would this trait of human kindness have shown; as a sunbeam on the wings of a proud eagle, that at eventide, seeks his island-eyrie, after having vanquished all that resisted! He had stilled the tempests of Europe as the wise and kind Magician stilled the elements and the

demons; and when, like him, he was to lay his terrors aside, would not the spectacle have been still more noble and sublime, if, like Prospero, he had closed all with a strain of mercy's music? We shall not say that the affair left a blot on the duke's escutcheon; we can imagine that, with his rigid habits of adherence to form, his unwillingness in any particulars to overstep his powers or prerogatives, and the natural reserve of his character, he might not feel himself called upon directly to interfere; but, had he for once cast all such feelings aside, and striven energetically to save Ney, it would have cast such an enhancing light over all his glories, that we cannot but regret its absence.

We shall not follow the Duke of Wellington in the remaining portion of his career. As a statesman, he displayed the same decision and the same intellectual perspicacity which had marked him as a soldier; he had a deep sympathy with that old Conservatism which has now been so severely battered by Free-traders and Manchester schools, but which numbered in its ranks much of the highest and the noblest blood in Britain; when the trumpet of advancement spoke so clearly and so loud that it could be neither mistaken nor resisted, he advanced. It was when he was at the head of the government, in 1829, that the famous measure for the emancipation of the Roman Catholics was passed.

We seem to see him, after the pacification of Europe, taking up his abode, in calm majesty, in the island round which he had built such a battlement of strength and of glory. We shall apply to him the superb thought of Tennyson:—

“With his hand against the hilt,  
He paced the troubled land, like Peace.”

We trust that some portraiture of the character of the

Duke of Wellington has been presented to the reader in the foregoing paragraphs. It well became us to trust for such portraiture to his mighty deeds rather than to our puny words. But we deem a few supplementary remarks necessary for the general summing up of his character. His radical characteristics were calmness, clearness, strength; they are easily read, and it is not difficult to refer to their action every portion of his career. We see them everywhere: in the unerring but silent care with which he gained a comprehensive knowledge of the conditions of every contest in which he was engaged; in the piercing and certain glance by which he detected the error of an opponent; in the sedate and massive composure of his despatches, where clearness of vision produces pictures rivalling the efforts of art; in the marble stillness and strength of his firm cheek and unwrinkled forehead. We trace the same characteristics in his valor. He has been called cautious and hesitating; after the charges of Assaye, the passage of the Douro, and the eagle swoop of Salamanca! The accusation has been founded on a simple mistake. We have been told, and with sufficient truth, that the word impossible is a word of ill omen; the scrupulous, hesitating ideologist who fears to take a step lest the earth yawn, is little worth. Yet the power to discern the impossible is but the necessary complement of the power to discern the possible. A thousandfold clamor declares that such a thing cannot be done, but the man of commanding intellect distinctly hears the voice of nature saying it can, and does it; he is declared valiant, fiery, and so forth: a similar clamor pronounces such a thing to be possible, but the man of mind still hears the voice of nature whispering—"No," and abstains from doing it; he is called cautious, phlegmatic, or cowardly. Both clamors have been heard in the

case of Wellington; and it were a question which was the more inane. Few eyes ever looked upon a battle-field with a surer perception of the possible and the impossible than his; he would not draw his sword to hew rocks, but when he did draw it, it went through.

Much has been said concerning the coldness of Wellington's emotions, and his alleged want of kindness. In this portion of his character, too, we find the traits we have specified. He possessed a kindness all his own. It must be granted that he never exhibited that strange fascination of genius which has been so powerful in many instances — in a Mirabeau, a Napoleon, a Hannibal. Yet a manly kindness was his, which comported well with the massive strength of his character. He loved, if we may so say, in the mass; his kindness was that of calm, considerate reason, and borrowed no flash from passion. In India he used no small arts to secure attachment; he was encircled, and he wished to be so, by the dignity of a highborn British gentleman. Yet his rule was felt to be kindly and beneficent, and the inhabitants of the wide provinces whose affairs he administered blessed him in their hearts. He might not, with sentimental sigh, lament over the individual loss or destruction; but the general prosperity, the happiness of the people as a whole, lay near his heart: he did not care to dispense those small personal favors whence are born kind words and smiles, but he spread his blessings, as from a great cornucopia, over the land. It was so, also, in his military career. If we may say that he did not love each soldier, we must yet assert that no general ever loved his army better. If the individual soldier had to be sacrificed for the good of the army, he hesitated not; but, since the efficiency of the army required the comfort and safety of the individual soldier, the British private could not pos-

sibly have sustained fewer hardships in Spain than he experienced under Wellington. In a word, and in all cases, those under our great chief experienced that security and assured joy which weakness always finds under the shield of strength. We might appeal to the case of the captive son of Dhoondiah, to prove that kindness lay deep in his nature; it was this which, uniting with his powerful faculties, naturally produced the considerate beneficence which we assert to have distinguished him. We cannot believe that he looked upon his army merely as a machine, and that all his care for it arose from simple calculation; but he was content, if he *deserved* his soldiers' love by maintaining their general comfort, to be without it rather than abstain from sacrificing one for the good of all. Of all theatricality he was singularly void, and his emotions were always under the strict guidance of reason.

There have been countless historical parallels instituted between Wellington and other great generals. He has been very ably compared to Cromwell, and in some respects he resembled that astonishing man. The same piercing vision, the same swift energy, the same organizing genius, distinguished both. But the parallel fails in a most important point: the conditions of the time made it morally impossible for a Cromwell to be produced in the last great European outburst of intellect. In the great Puritan awakening, the infinite elements of religion and of duty had the most prominent and pervading influence: the Puritan felt himself fighting under the banner of Jehovah; the Earth was to him a little desert, bordered by the celestial mountains, and what mattered it though he fought and toiled here, if he saw the crown awaiting him yonder. A time which produced its highest literary impersonation in Milton, might have, as its great martial impersonation, Cromwell. But

in that mighty shaking of the nations which is still going on, the infinite elements of our nature have probably had less direct influence upon the minds of men than was ever the case before. The highest idea of the philosophism from which it sprung, was, that man should conquer the elements, assert his freedom, and carpet for himself the earth with the flowers of paradise. Science was put into the place of God ; the light of earth was deemed to have utterly eclipsed the light from heaven. Never, perhaps, did the world so minutely answer to the idea of a stage, where puppet philosophers and puppet armies played their parts in the most profound unconsciousness that God held the wires ; never was the Divinity, who was silently shaping the ends so totally invisible to those who were rough-hewing them. Of the distinctive opinions of this era, we regard Shelley as the greatest literary impersonation ; its two greatest martial impersonations were Napoleon and Wellington. It is but a partial resemblance that there can be between the great Puritan general and the conqueror of Waterloo ; a more correct parallel would be between the Dukes of Wellington and of Albemarle.

We think we find a singularly close parallel to the career of Napoleon and Wellington in that of Hannibal and Scipio. The first of these ancient generals is pretty generally recognized as the greatest military genius that ever lived. He ran his course from victory to victory, until a general arose to oppose him, whose attention was sleepless, whose accuracy was unfailing, whose intellectual vision was penetrating, whose valor was dauntless, and who could bring troops into the field which no African levies could match. They met on the plains of Zama ; fame has not failed to record that the generalship of Hannibal at least equalled that of Scipo ; but victory fled forever to the

Roman eagles. Wellington belonged to the class of generals represented by Scipio; Napoleon to that represented by Hannibal. The wild force of genius has oft been fated by nature to be finally overcome by quiet strength, and never was it more signally so, than in the case of Napoleon and Wellington. The volcano sends up its red bolt with terrific force, as if it would strike the stars; but the calm, resistless hand of gravitation seizes it, and brings it to the earth.

We look upon the late duke as one of the soundest and stateliest men that Great Britain has produced; one of those embodied forces which are sent by God to perform important parts in the history of the world, and around which their respective generations are seen to cluster. The memory of such men is a sacred treasure. The men of Elis did well in appointing the descendants of Phidias to preserve from spot or from detriment their grand statue of gold and ivory; it had been produced in one generation, it was much if following generations kept it whole and untarnished. Our great Wellington has just been placed in the Temple of the Past, to sit there with the heroes of other times, and to witness that among us too, in the nineteenth century, a mighty man arose: it is the duty of us and of our children, to see that no blot abide upon his massive and majestic statue,

## VI.

### NAPOLEON BONAPARTE.

THE figure of Napoleon Bonaparte first emerges into the view of history at the seige of Toulon, towards the end of the year 1793.

The revolutionary storm, in which the evening of the last century went down over France, was at its wildest working. Those fierce, irregular forces, which, in the world of mind are scientifically correspondent to the tornado, the earthquake, the fever, the volcano, in the world of external nature, and which seem retained for seasons of crisis and emergency, were performing their terrible ministry. The statitical balance of society had been disturbed: the normal forces, the forces of calmness, of growth, of persistence, required to be re-adjusted. The untamed, primeval powers, which always underlie the surface of civilization, like old Titans under quiet hills and wooded plains, had broken their confinement; the solid framework of capacity and authority, by which they had been compressed, had crumbled down in mere impotence and imbecility; and they now went raving and uncommanded over France. Fear, fury, hot enthusiasm, fanaticism, ferocity, the courage of the wildcat, the cruelty of the tiger, hope to the measure of frenzy, suspicion to the measure of disease, spread confusion through all the borders of the country. At Toulon

the general confusion was forcibly represented, though but in miniature. The town, defended by a motley crew of British, Spaniards, Neapolitans, and insurgent French, was besieged, on behalf of the convention, by two armies. These weltered wildly round it, strong in numbers, in valor, in zeal, in stubbornness, but rendered powerless through want of control and direction. Here, as universally over France, the gravitation by which faculty comes into the place of command had not had time to act. Cartaux, the general, strutted about in gold-lace, self-satisfied in his ignorance of the position of affairs, bold in his unconsciousness of danger. Representatives of the people, empowered to intermeddle on all occasions, swaggered here and there in the camp, storming, babbling, urging everything to feverish haste, making progress anywhere impossible. Noise, distraction, fussy impotence: such was the spectacle presented on all hands.

Then appeared, to take the command of the artillery, the young Corsican officer, Napoleon Bonaparte. Though very young, just completing his twenty fourth year, he had a look of singular composure, taciturnity, and resolution. Short and slim, but well knit and active, his figure and port were expressive at once of alertness and self-possession; his eye very quiet and very clear. It would hardly have struck a casual observer that *here* was the commanding and irresistible mind, which was to introduce order, the highest, perhaps, of which they were capable, among the tumultuous forces of the French Revolution.

Looking steadily and silently into the matter, the secret of success at once revealed itself to Napoleon. The troops and artillery had been scattered and dissipated. Yonder was the keystone of the arch; it was an endless business to batter upon each stone in the structure; concentrate the

fire upon that one point, bring down that one stone, and the whole must fall. The town and harbor of Toulon lay here to the north; the channel by which both communicated with the Mediterranean stretched yonder towards the south: and that promontory, at some distance from the town, its strong fortifications giving it the name of Little Gibraltar and indicating the importance attached to it, commanded this channel. If, therefore, Little Gibraltar was won, you could sweep the gateway of the harbor in such a manner that the British fleet would be shy of remaining; and the British fleet once withdrawn, Toulon could offer no resistance. Thus clear and definite was Napoleon's thought, and it was to be proved whether he could as skilfully convert it into action. In action he seemed thought personified; thought made alive, and armed with the sword of the lightning. The wild valor of enthusiasm had been nothing to this directed courage; the dogged obstinacy of fanatic rage had been weak in comparison with this calm resolution; the haste and fieriness of Celtic ardor had been tardy to this imperturbable swiftness. Day and night, sleeping only for a few hours in his cloak by the guns, he toils at his batteries, collecting cannon, devising feints, turning the very blunders of incompetence into occasions of advantage; no stupidity, no envy, no obstacle can ruffle his composure or daunt his courage; no fatigue can blunt his alertness, or cause a nerve to flutter in that slight but steely frame. At last all is prepared. Suddenly there bursts upon Little Gibraltar an overwhelming fire. Eight thousand bombs are poured on it over night: in the morning, the troops surge in, victorious, through the shattered walls, and Little Gibraltar is taken. Toulon then falls; and Napoleon Bonaparte is a marked man.

During the spring and summer of 1794, he was variously

employed; surveying the Mediterranean fortresses, fighting in the Maritime Alps, always doing the work in hand speedily, quietly, well. Hitherto he professed Jacobin principles, and had used his pen on behalf of the extreme revolutionary party. He was now intimate with the younger Robespierre. While engaged in the Maritime Alps, he was urged by the latter to accept the command of the national guard of Paris. Had he done so, had Napoleon instead of Henriot commanded for Robespierre on the 10th of Thermidor 1794, how strangely the destinies of France and of Europe might have been modified! But his Jacobinism was never too fervent for the control of an austere, calculating, most practical judgment: and it seems likely that already, not distinctly seen, but gradually clearing itself of obscuring vapors, his own star, serene, steady, cold, was beginning to concentrate all the energies of his soul into one intense passion of devotion to self. He decisively refused. Augustin Robespierre was, indeed, an "honorable man," manageable enough, doubtless; but he had discerned Robespierre the elder to be "no trifler." The iron Napoleon knew the iron Robespierre, and instinctively recoiled from one whom he knew he could not bend. Events were left to their course. The sword of the Terror, held only by the giddy, flustered Henriot, was shivered into fragments. Robespierre and his party were overthrown, the Jacobins dispersed, and the current of the Revolution turned into new channels. The reaction set in with extreme violence; and Napoleon, at first perhaps seriously endangered by his connection with the Robespierres, came to Paris and fell out of employment.

The reaction from the principles of the Reign of Terror was violent: but strong as it was, the inhabitants of the capital, not the mere mob, but the sober and weighty por-

tion of the population, were not disposed to forego the greatest of those prizes for which they had so long and so desperately contended. This sacrifice the Convention, by the constitution of 1795, definitely and beyond question required of them. In the beginning of October of that year the sections of Paris rose in arms. Barras, whose eye had fallen on Napoleon at Toulon, pointed him out to the Convention as a man on whom reliance could be placed. On the night of the third of October he was offered the command of the forces available for the suppression of the insurrection, Barras being nominally his chief. He was in the gallery of the Convention when the proposal for his appointment was made. He retired to deliberate. What thoughts passed through his mind in the interval can never be known: but at the end of half an hour, he had bidden adieu to his Jacobinism forever. To what extent he had been disgusted by the excesses of the Jacobins, to what extent a close observation of that in practice which had looked so beautiful in theory, had intensified or developed the radical skepticism and cynicism of his mind, need not be conjectured; but whatever faintly roseate hues of romance linger about the youth of Napoleon, from his outspoken and ardent devotion to the revolution, here finally fade away. That man cannot be called the soldier of democracy, who deliberately made himself the instrument of bridling democracy, and subjecting it, before he was himself its sovereign, to a selfish and contracted oligarchy.

But a piece of work was now to be done, and the Napoleon of Toulon became recognizable. There were fifty guns at the neighboring camp of Sablons. These guns were the Little Gibraltar of Vendemiare. Self-possessed, calm, but with that swiftness which startled and bewildered an opponent, like the flash of a meteor out of a dark and

silent sky, he ordered Murat, a man to be depended upon for swiftness, to bring in the pieces. They were clutched almost from under the eyes of the sectionaries. The Convention held its meetings at this time in the Palace of the Tuilleries; on this point the attack of the insurgents was directed, and around this point Napoleon marshalled his defences. On every bridge and quay communicating with the palace, sweeping every street and open space, he posted cannon. In the centre of the bristling circle he stood, quiet, composed, as one at home. It was the fourth of October, 1795. In the early part of the afternoon the Parisians advanced to the attack, numbering about forty thousand. Habituated to street-fighting by six years of revolution, and flushed by some apparent successes of the preceding day, the sectionaries poured furiously along the streets towards the Tuilleries. It was not the first time that the citizens of Paris, familiar with the conquering of their King and of their Parliaments, had flooded those avenues. On the famous tenth of June and twentieth of August, 1792, for instance, they had come on in wild flood, and a monarchy had gone down before them. But they were now encountered by a thing new in those years. The unfixed gaze and maudlin good-heartedness of Louis, always ready to parley, unwilling to shed a drop of blood though to save a torrent, terrible only to his friends, had given place to the compressed lips, dark brows, and unflinching eye of Napoleon. Betrayed, uncommanded body-guards were here no longer; but in their place an army in position, strung to exertion in every nerve, as a muscular arm is strung by a determined will. Napoleon would do *his* parleying through the throats of fifty pieces of cannon. The sectionaries, sweeping on fiercely, were torn up by cannon-ball and grape-shot. The tumultuous mass

recoiled; sobered suddenly, as a blustering bully is sobered by the buffet of a brawny arm. The guns continued to play; the ranks under the command of Napoleon advanced; in a few hours the sectionaries were driven to their homes and disarmed. The piece of work was done.

Napoleon had now stepped fairly beyond the sphere of private life. His marriage with Josephine, for whom he seems to have entertained no slight affection, soon took place. He was appointed to the command of the army of Italy, and in the spring of 1796 reached the head-quarters at Nice.

Of all the periods in the life of Napoleon, the mind is apt to rest with most enthusiasm upon that of his early campaigns in Italy. His fame may be said to have been as yet unsullied; even that apparent defection from the principles of liberty, which a severe investigation of his conduct reveals, admits not unreasonably of being traced to a soldierly love of order. And he had won his exalted position through so honest and unmistakable a display of intellectual power! Unfriended among the myriads of revolutionary France, and at first scowled upon by envious incompetence, he had approved himself a man of indubitable and overpowering capacity, who could think, who could act, whom it would clearly be advantageous to obey. One cannot but experience a thrill of emotion as the imagination pictures him in his first appearance among the soldiers of Italy. Of all warrior-faces Napoleon's is the finest. Not only has it that clearness of line, that strength and firmness of chiselling, which gives a nobleness to the faces of all great soldiers; there is in it, in the eye especially, a depth of thought and reflection which belongs peculiarly to itself, and suggests not merely the soldier but the sovereign. And perhaps the face of Napoleon never looked

so nobly, as when first an army worthy of his powers waited his commands, the calm assurance of absolute self-reliance giving a statue-like stillness to his brows and temples on which still shone the brightness of youth, the light of a fame now to be all his own kindling that intense and steadfast eye, and his gaze turned towards the fields of Italy. Cannot one fancy his glance going along the ranks, lighting a gleam in every eye, as he presented himself to his troops? "Soldiers," thus ran his proclamation, "you are almost naked, half-starved: the government owes you much and can give you nothing. Your patience, your courage, in the midst of these rocks, have been admirable, but they reflect no splendor on your arms. I am about to conduct you into the most fertile plains of the earth. Rich provinces, opulent cities, will soon be in your power: there you will find abundant harvests, honor and glory. Soldiers of Italy, will you fail in courage?" In a moment he had established between himself and his soldiers that understanding by which, more than by cannon or bayonet, victories are won. Privates and commanders at once felt that this was the man to follow.

Then commenced that marvellous series of campaigns which makes the year 1796 an era in the history of warfare, in the development of civilization; in which the fiery energies, unchained by the French Revolution, were first directed by supreme military genius against the standing institutions of Europe to their overthrow and subversion; in which the eye of the world was first fixed in wondering gaze on the fully unveiled face of Napoleon. Not merely to the soldier are these campaigns interesting and profitable. It is for all men instructive to mark the achievements of pure capacity, to watch the wondrous spirit-element controlling and effecting, dazzling difficulty from its steady

march, causing lions to cower aside in its sovereign presence. We are so constituted, besides, that we cannot behold energy, perseverance, courage, resolution, without a thrill of emulous sympathy. As we note the progress of that intrepid, indomitable Corsican, from victory to victory, we kindle with those emotions which animated the troops of Napoleon; which sent the grenadiers through the grape-shot sweeping like snow-drift along the bridge of Lodi; which renewed and renewed the bloody struggle on the dykes of Arcola; which made the French columns scorn rest and delay, forget the limit placed to human endurance, rise over the faintness of fatigue and crush down the gnawing of hunger, march through mountain paths all night and spring exultant on the foe at break of dawn, if only the way was led by *him*.

A review of these campaigns, even of the most cursory description, is here impossible, and would be superfluous. All men may be supposed to have a somewhat familiar acquaintance with one of the most brilliant passages of modern history, and to be capable of taking the same point of view which must be occupied in order to cast the eye along their course, as illustrating the character of Napoleon.

The Italian campaigns seem specially adapted to demonstrate a military capacity at once indubitable, many-sided, and supreme. They exhibit not only the fiery spring that has so often caught the smile of fortune, but the cool calculation and patient resolution which seem to compel it. They show the victor crowned, not once, or twice, or thrice, not under this favoring circumstance of to-day or through that happy thought of to-morrow, but so often that the possibility of fortuitous success is eliminated, and under circumstances of disadvantage, so manifold and so varied, that even envy, unless aided by crotchet, stupidity or fixed

idea, must own that this is beyond all question, the inscrutable and irresistible power of mind. The first fierce onslaught by which Sardinia, bleeding and prostrate, was snatched from the Austrian alliance, by which the gates of Italy were thrown open, and by which Europe was startled, as at three successive thunder peals, by the victories of Montenotte, Millesimo and Mondovi, all in the space of a month, might, at least possibly, have been the result of youthful daring and the valor of the Republican army. But the defeats of Colli, the Sardinian, were succeeded by those of Beaulieu, the Austrian; the defeats of Beaulieu were succeeded by the defeats in two campaigns of the well-supported and resolute Wurmser; the defeats of Wurmser were succeeded by the defeats, in two campaigns more, of Alvinzi, also furnished with overpowering numbers; and when Archduke Charles advanced to re-conquer a thoroughly subjugated Lombardy, he too was met and driven back. There were six distinct campaigns; and when Napoleon, at their close, dictated, in 1797, the treaty of Campo Formio, he remained indisputably the first warrior in Europe.

A great deal has been said of the change introduced by Napoleon in these campaigns, into military tactics. He broke through, it is said, all the rules and etiquette of war, poured his forces always on single points, was now in his enemy's front, now in his rear, and, on the whole, introduced a new system of warfare. That he introduced a change in the mode of carrying on hostilities, among the generals of Europe, does not admit of doubt. The system of warfare by which Napoleon was overthrown, put in operation by men who had marched under his banner, was indeed a more rapid and fearful thing than that over which he won his first triumphs. But it seems as little doubtful,

that the change was nothing more than that natural one which is inevitable in any art or science where consummate genius displays itself. His generalship was essentially that of all the greatest generals. To form combinations with such invention and accuracy, and execute them with such celerity, as will bring an overpowering force to bear upon a single point, had been the object of generals from Luxembourg to Dumouriez; and had been effected, by the former against William of Orange and by the latter against Brunswick, with a skill and celerity not unworthy of Napoleon. Wellington studied war among the Ghauts of Himalaya, yet the ablest combinations and the most impetuous attacks of the best Marshals trained in the school of Bonaparte were unable to baffle him. In our own time we have seen war settle back to that laggard habit, into which it had fallen in the hands of the Austrians before the revolutionary campaigns. The advent of military genius of the first order might have introduced precisely such a change of tactics under the walls of Sebastopol, as Napoleon introduced on the plains of Lombardy. He did not provide himself with a new horse; but he was the man to put Bucephalus to his speed.

The quickness and clearness with which, in these campaigns, he apprehended the features of every position, and the necessities of every situation, are amazing. The reports of spies, the vague hints of rumor, became clear before him. As if by second sight, he saw in the far distance every disposition of his enemy. With the pieces before him on a chess-board, it would have required discrimination and decision, to estimate or anticipate every move of his adversary, and instantly to adapt his own force to thwart it. But with armies overwhelming in number, approaching over wide spaces of country, with only the reports of spies

or traitors to depend upon for intelligence, with a thousand openings for mishap in the very transmission of orders, with the certainty that a slip might be ruin, to have the whole spread out as clear as the starry spheres before his telescopic eye, and again and again, by swift perception and decision, to launch the bolt just where it was needed:—this indeed demanded a master mind. And he effected these things so often and so variously! First, as we said, D'Argenteau was overpowered in Piedmont, the French army concentrating itself into a wedge and breaking through the centre of the Allies. Then came the brilliant fighting of Lodi and the investment of Mantua. Wurmser and Quasdonowich were next to be overthrown. They were near each other at the bottom of the Lago di Garda, and could they have united, resistance might have been vain. But swift as lightning Quasdonowich was shattered and flung back on this hand, and the whole flood, wheeling round like a heady current, turned to sweep Wurmser away on that. Wurmser, tough and valiant, retreated for a time, and then advanced again on Mantua, leaving Davidowich with a strong army to defend Trient and the passes of the Tyrol. Suddenly, while Wurmser was looking out for the French along his front, he was startled by the intelligence that, far in the rear, Davidowich had been utterly routed. In a moment, this spirit-like Napoleon was down, irresistible, upon himself. The eye of a civilian may not deserve much confidence; but this overthrow of Davidowich *first*, and advance thereupon on Wurmser, with all his Austrian communications broken, and not improbably in some slight bewilderment, assuredly *looks* one of the finest bits of work to be met with in the annals of war. It is needless to multiply instances. Such was Napoleon's mode of carrying on hostilities.

The amplitude of comprehension with which he embraced every circumstance of the war, appearing to have the end as distinctly before him as the beginning, and the remote as visibly present as the near, baffles description. Consider that single instance of his first passage of the Po. He has in a month laid Sardinia prostrate at his feet; he has taken eighty guns, twenty-one standards, and two great fortresses; he has slain or captured twenty-five thousand of the enemy; he is twenty-six years of age; and now, as he concludes the treaty with the king of Sardinia, Europe is looking on him with wonder and admiration. His treaty is signed. Among other stipulations, he is careful to have it specified that it will be permitted to the French army to cross the Po at Valenza. Beaulieu takes the alarm; spares no pains to make his position at Valenza sure. He is looking eagerly for the French columns, when lo! he is informed that Napoleon has already crossed at Placenza, fifty miles down, and that he, Beaulieu, must face about fast enough if he would prevent an entrance into Milan. The veteran of twenty-six! With the first laurels on his brow, the plaudits of Europe in his ears, and a monarch accepting a treaty from his dictation, he had closed his eye at once to the past, saw only the future, and in the very council chambers remembered that he was in the field. There was nothing very brilliant, certainly nothing chivalrous here: but what could escape a coolness, a presence of mind, a power of vision like this?

That forwardness of look, that instant forgetfulness of the past, was one of the most remarkable characteristics of this greatest worker of modern times. Other soldiers look to victory for rest; Napoleon's might have looked upon it with apprehensiveness, as the unfailing herald of new toil. He indulged himself in no raptures over his

battle-fields; not a look did he take: was the work over, or could it be confided to inferior hands, he was away on the instant, to front battle on some distant field. At Rivoli, his exertions were overpowering. He had three horses shot under him. At nightfall, one would have said that, without repose, flesh and blood could hold out no longer. But not a moment's rest did he take. The victory could now be completed by Massena and others; and he set out on the instant for Mantua, marching first all night and then all day. He arrives at Mantua. Any creature in the form of man, were he a mere incarnated spirit, would surely now seek repose. But Napoleon does not seek it. His soldiers, indeed, are unable to hold out any longer, but not he. He passes the night in walking about the outposts. "At one of these," says Lockhart in his own clear, admirable way, "he found a grenadier asleep by the root of a tree; and taking his gun, without wakening him, performed a sentinel's duty in his place for about half an hour; when the man, starting from his slumbers, perceived with terror and despair the countenance and occupation of his general. He fell on his knees before him. "My friend," said Napoleon, "here is your musket. You had fought hard, and marched long, and your sleep is excusable: but a moment's inattention might at present ruin the army. I happened to be awake, and have held your post for you. You will be more careful another time." He happened to be awake! Mr. Emerson might well say that this was a man of stone and iron.

But in truth, in these campaigns, he showed himself armed at all points. He could manage the Directory just as well as the Austrians. Barras had recommended him for Vendemiare, as a man who would not stand upon ceremony; and now he found it was perhaps too true. The

Directory, professing unbounded admiration, would have divided the Italian army, giving part to Napoléon, part to Kellermann; thus, in all calculable certainty, ruining Napoléon, subverting his conquests, and bringing an Austrian army upon France through the Sardinian Passes. He saw through their design and defeated it in an instant, by simply throwing up his command, and compelling them, afraid of public opinion, to reinstate him. For every emergency, he had its own requirement. At Lodi, a furious charge, a display of dauntless valor, was necessary. So he seized a standard and rushed into the tempest of grape. At Arcola, the battle was won by a sudden thought, a clever trick, which could, however, have occurred only to a mind absolutely imperturbable and perfectly clear. At Tagliamento, he conquered by a stratagem which reminds one very much of the ancient generals. In the thinking and the acting part of his profession, he was equally at home. You may say of him, that never did any one more notably diminish the interval between the tardiness of thought and the swiftness of action. As he himself said in after years, his head and his hand were in immediate connection.

Such was the Napoleon whom we might have discerned at the conferences of Formio, in October, 1797. Ere that time he had observably altered his demeanor with friends and dependants. He appreciated, with his usual clear, cold accuracy, his position; he was the head of a triumphant army, the unbounded favorite of the French people, now fairly kindled into a passion for military glory, and the subject of so feeble a government as the Directory. He said afterwards that his ambition was strong but of a cold nature: it would have been more strictly correct to say that it was of a practical nature, that it never passed the limits of the possible, that, like every other quality and char-

acteristic of his mind, it was of a sternly realistic nature. It admits of no doubt that schemes of empire were already beginning to dawn upon him.

It must be added that, at the date of the treaty of Campo Formio, another aspect of Napoleon's character had become manifest. In his dealings with the Lombard peasantry and with the Grand Duke of Tuscany, he had shown himself thoroughly unscrupulous in the means he used to effect his ends. He crushed the Lombard insurrection with cruel severity, showing an utter disregard to the effusion of blood. "It is the nature," he said, "of the giant to squeeze." It is doubtless a general characteristic of strong and rugged minds to allow the end a large power of justifying the means, especially if they have been accustomed to carnage as the instrument of their purposes. Cromwell's mind seems to have been originally by no means rugged, but rather kindly and affectionate; yet his words about the "knocking on the head" at Drogheda make one feel somewhat chill. At all events, Napoleon had now shown that there might easily be a stronger necessity with him than the necessity of sparing a brother's life.

In the beginning of 1798, we find him again in Paris. He knew himself to be the most popular man in France, but made a show of retiring into a private station. He lost no opportunity, however, of ingratiating himself with the people, and observed carefully the weakness of government. But he discerned that his day of opportunity had not yet arrived. He in vain attempted to gain peaceably a seat in the government, and, as his Italian army was no longer around him, he had no sword in hand to cut his way to one. With that ambition of a cold nature, he could bide his time.

Having been appointed to the command of the army

destined for the invasion of England, and discovering that such an invasion was then at least impracticable, he procured the assent of the Directory to a descent upon Egypt. He sailed in May, 1798.

There are but two circumstances demanding notice in connection with the Egyptian campaign.

The first is the new and striking instance it afforded of Napoleon's personal endurance. In the burning heat of an Egyptian July, the army set out from Alexandria, to march along the Nile and bring the Mamelukes to an engagement. The enemy had cleared the country of every living and every green thing. The sand threw up its burning glare, as if in concert with the flaming sun above. The air swarmed with noxious insects. There was little water, and that nauseous. In one word, all those torments and agonies pressed upon the French hosts, with the description of which we have now become so familiar. The soldiers became mutinous in their torture; the fiery spirits of Murat and Lannes were driven almost to madness; they trod their tri-colors in the dust. But Napoleon suffered nothing. He would not even sleep in the middle of the day. He "wore his uniform buttoned up as at Paris; never showed one bead of sweat on his brow; nor thought of repose except to lie down in his cloak the last at night, and start up first in the morning." Really the forty centuries that looked down upon him from the pyramids had seldom seen so remarkable a being.

The second circumstance in this Egyptian campaign which seems deserving of special observation is the institution, on the part of Napoleon, of a series of improvements in the condition of Egypt, of which the beneficial effects have not ceased in our own day. This, for the first time, brings into prominent view a phase of Napoleon's character

not suggested by his warlike exploits. The power of destruction was but half his capacity; nor would it seem to have been that part which he most highly prized or most willingly indulged. He too, with the right instinct of an imperial mind, loved to see the world grow greener round him. The savans whom he had taken with him to Egypt, examined, in obedience to his orders, the “long-smothered traces of many an ancient device for improving the agriculture of the country. Canals that had been shut up for centuries were re-opened: the waters of the Nile flowed once more where they had been guided by the skill of the Pharaohs or the Ptolemies. Cultivation was extended; property secured; and” adds our authority, “it cannot be doubted that the signal improvements since introduced in Egypt, are attributable mainly to the wise example of the French administration.”

But, on the whole, the Egyptian expedition did not turn out precisely in accordance with the expectations of Napoleon. His progress eastward was arrested at Acre. The dreams of oriental dominion, which, for a brief space, had fascinated or amused his imagination, faded away forever. He became aware that, in his absence, great events, disastrous to France, but which might prove propitious to his ambition, had taken place in Europe. He quitted Egypt without apprizing his soldiers of his departure; and in October, 1799, was once more in Paris.

The incompetence and corruption of the Directory had ere now disgusted all parties, and the reverses which had been sustained by the French arms, in Holland, Belgium, and Italy, had prepared the people of Paris to welcome back the victorious young general. He brought with him tidings of the victory of Aboukir; earnest that the old

Italian glory might still be recalled. He was received with enthusiasm.

Circumstances, he soon discovered, were favorable to his views. A sword was ready for him and he did not scruple to grasp the hilt. Three regiments of dragoons solicited the honor of being reviewed by him, and a large proportion of the military men in Paris requested permission to wait upon him with congratulations. These all were directed to present themselves at his house at six o'clock on the morning of the 18th Brumaire, 10th of November. Meanwhile measures were taken by the supporters of Napoleon, Sieyes and others, to turn their presence to advantage. The legislative power was at that time lodged in the Council of Ancients and the Council of Five Hundred. The former was convoked in the Tuileries at seven o'clock on the morning of the 18th, at the moment when Napoleon was surrounded by the chief military force of Paris. Two decrees were proposed and passed: first, that the meetings of the legislative bodies should be transferred to St. Cloud; second, that Napoleon should be named commandant of the troops and National Guard of Paris. The object of the first was to remove the Council of Five hundred from Parisian support, in the prospect of its subversion; the second armed Napoleon with that weapon which it was necessary at least to brandish over the heads of the defenders and representatives of French freedom, and which he was henceforth to retain as sceptre. These decrees were passed. Napoleon was invested with his new command in the midst of the officers assembled round him; and the nomination was hailed by the soldiery with acclamations.

Nothing further of importance occurred on that day. The two councils met next day at St. Cloud. Napoleon had already surrounded the chateau in which they were to

assemble' by a body of soldiers under Murat; by this act alone putting the character of the following proceedings beyond doubt. It is painful to trace what followed. One hurries over it as a scene of despicable mock-tragedy, scandalous to all parties. The Council of Ancients proved subservient. The Council of Five Hundred assumed a different tone and attitude; the hall echoed with heroic, death-defiant eloquence; a patriotic oath was sworn, even Lucien the President, though Napoleon's brother, being compelled to take part in it. The legislators of France were to die at their posts. The presence of Napoleon in the hall served only to endanger his own life, and to raise to height of still nobler temper the loquacious heroes. Then entered grenadiers, with ruthless look, and naked, level bayonets: and the legislators of France, the patriotic oath still hot on their lips, scampered off by door and window! Had Louis the sixteenth, on the 23d of June, 1789, sent a similar force of grenadiers, say under Captain D'Agoust, into the Hall of the Third Estate, would the result have been *this?*

It was now decreed, by such remnant of the French legislature as gave itself wholly to the purposes of Napoleon, that the two councils should be adjourned until February, and that the government should be lodged provisionally in the hands of three consuls, of whom the first was Napoleon. Sieyes coming, with Ducos his brother consul, next day, to transact business, and thinking, sure enough, Napoleon would consent to remain the mere military man, leaving civil and diplomatic affairs to be regulated by his own incomparable capacity, discovered that he was mistaken. "Bonaparte," he said in the evening, "can do, and will do, everything himself!" The Abbé and his col-

league felt themselves unceremoniously converted into tools. Napoleon was ruler of France.

The first act of the Napoleon drama was now approaching its completion. In order to obtain for Bonaparte the name of Emperor, and to consolidate power in his hands, two things still remained to be done. It was necessary first, that he should, by a firm and sagacious internal government, demonstrate his capacity to secure to France that calmness and stability, which had so long been wanting to the distracted country, and without which the operations of industry could not be sustained: and second, that he should, by some brilliant exploit of foreign warfare, encircle his government with that glory which, in the eyes of Frenchmen, hides innumerable faults, and which might render him certain of the enthusiastic support of the army. The achievement of these two objects may be considered as filling up the period between the 19th Brumaire, 1799, and the coronation, in December, 1804.

The campaign of Marengo was peculiarly adapted to excite the military enthusiasm of the nation, and to silence any Republican murmurs against the rule of the First Consul which might linger in the army. The skill with which the intention of Napoleon was masked, and the originality of the whole conception of the campaign, might be exhibited and dwelt upon, as demonstrative of military genius; but the most remarkable circumstance connected with this campaign seems after all to have been its magnificent daring. Suspicions have been thrown out, to all appearance groundless, as to the personal bravery of Napoleon in later years; but in all the early part of his career, his courage was not only dauntless but fiery. If in any respect the massiveness and adamantine strength of his character could be said to partake of French vehemence

and Italian excitability, it was in the recklessness with which he rushed into fire, as at Lodi, or confronted perilous risks, as in crossing and re-crossing the Mediterranean with a Nelson on his track. And the Italian campaign of 1800, with its passage of the Alps and victory of Marengo, could have been ventured upon only by a man whose mind rested on a basis of utter soldierly fearlessness. The prize for which he played was indeed splendid; but the alternative of success was absolute, instant, irretrievable ruin: yet his hand never shook, his eye never once filmed or quivered, as he staked all on one dread throw. It may indeed be fairly questioned whether, in this campaign, Napoleon's daring did not approach the character of foolhardiness; whether it can perfectly vindicate its claim to the character of that high valor, whose seeming recklessness advances steadily under the shield of foresight, whose most startling swiftness is but the laggard step of material energy following the geometry of mind. In the case of any other man save Napoleon, the assertion could be made without hesitation that it did. But much could be risked by an intellect so vigilant, a readiness and presence of mind so reliable, and a resolution so inflexible, as Napoleon's. "I think this is a battle lost," said Dessaix, coming up on the evening of Marengo and seeing the French columns all broken and retreating. "I think it is a battle won," answered Napoleon; and in an hour he had added to the roll of his fame one of the most brilliant victories he ever gained. A man who could thus depend on himself in execution could be very daring in conception. Be this as it may, the battle was won; the French conquests in Italy were almost entirely restored; and Napoleon returned to Paris, dearer than ever to the French army, the boast and darling

of the nation, and with the hopes of his opponents smitten into the dust.

The internal government of the First Consul was the gradual development of the system of the Empire, and the elaboration of those ceremonies and grandeurs, by which the French people were to be studiously reminded of Charlemagne. It would be inappropriate or impossible to view it separately. Suffice it here to say, that a tranquil and acquiescing, if not in any degree enthusiastic France beheld Napoleon, on the 2nd of December, 1804, set upon his head that diadem, which he had already encircled with a legion of honor and a brilliant constellation of marshals.

The empire of Napoleon is one of the most remarkable phenomena of modern times, and one fraught with deep and varied instruction. It will doubtless form a subject for investigation and discussion during centuries to come; and more than one may elapse before its character is accurately explained, or its place in the scheme of Providence discerned. But enough has already been done to render it possible to ascertain and define with something of scientific precision its essential feature. To do this will prove synonymous with discovering the radical character of him who was the founder and impersonation of that empire.

It is safe to permit one's enthusiasm large scope in contemplating Napoleon as emperor of France. The structure he erected was truly imperial in its dimensions; stable, many-sided, imposing; and the mind of which it was the image was the most variously and magnificently endowed that has exercised sovereignty for many centuries; if, indeed, in these ages, there has appeared any man who can on the whole be pronounced intellectually greater than Napoleon. No sooner did he become First Consul than

every department of the administration acquired a firmness of tone altogether new. It was not the formalized rigidness of the old régime, nor was it the fierce tension of the Terrorist rule: the one was the regularity of decrepitude, the other the overstrung activity of fever: here method and energy were combined. It is curious that he, whose career, contemplated in a general way, has so brilliant, sudden, meteoric an aspect, should have been called, and called truly, the most methodic of mankind. It is not impossible that Soult, Massena, or Moreau, would have defended France from external enemies nearly as effectually as Napoleon. But as every one of his marshals fell even here behind the great leader, so, in all the qualities which belong to the sovereign as distinguished from the soldier, he was incomparably superior to them all. To develop the material resources of the country; to extend mental cultivation and encourage mental activity, to the utmost limit consistent with the security of despotism; to adorn France with great works; to preserve national morality and love of order, so far at least as was essential to national stability; and to provide a uniform and equitable system of laws for the nation:—such were the objects he set before him. And he worked in the closet as he worked in the field. Every department of the administration was under his eye. No technical details could repel him; nay every sort of practical endeavor, every science, every economic and industrial art, enlisted his ardent sympathy. In every department his suggestions were valuable: he seems to have been as much at home with the jurists engaged on the Code Napoleon, as in directing the organization of the forces.

It is affecting to observe how this noblest aspect of the character of Napoleon, his profound and comprehensive

sympathy with the works of peace, his instinct, deeper than all his warlike tendencies, that peace is greater than war, comes out in St. Helena. He boasts, with real warmth of exultation, that he would have made the French populace the best educated in Europe: and the emotion with which he thought of Austerlitz was languid in comparison of that with which he recurred to the Code. His general mode of alluding to his victories, indeed, evinced a sagacity and soundness of mind, little less wonderful than the powers displayed in their achievement. They were quite ordinary matters; nothing mysterious or very great about them; dependent on an observance of the value of minutes, on quickness, coolness, presence of mind, and mere work-a-day, matter-of-fact qualities, on a committal of *fewer* blunders than your adversary, on fortuitous circumstances which did you no honor. But the thought was really dear to him that his influence might live in the ways of French existence as a peaceful and benignant presence; that somewhat of the orderliness and prosperity of citizen life would be traceable to him; that he would go down to posterity with the fame of a law-giver.

It would almost appear to be an inseparable characteristic of the mode in which mankind is educated, that truth after truth is lodged in the general mind in an extreme and one-sided form. For the last five and twenty years, the literary world of Britain and America has rung with denunciation of hearsay, of tradition, of system. Mirabeau was a man not of systems but "with an eye;" Danton, the same; Napoleon it would be loudly exclaimed, the same. But no magnificence of rhetoric can in the smallest degree affect the simple scientific fact, that men and nations work by system, that the inventions and methods of genius can be in great measure stereotyped and made the property of

the race, that parchments, laws, constitutions, are the ultimate fruits of political civilization. To discover the principles of such, to construct and establish them, is the work of genius; they are effective precisely in proportion as they are put in operation by ability and energy: but it is an error, precisely co-ordinate with the error of misconceiving the corresponding functions of genius, to represent them as in themselves of no value. And in no case does the mind of Napoleon exhibit a greatness so truly and calmly imperial, as in the earnest endeavor to give perpetuity to what otherwise would have been fleeting; to leave its stamp on the institutions of the nation; to breathe its ethereal spirit into the framework of system. Genius is the vital sap pouring from the root and stem; it is the glory of civilization to conduct and disseminate it through a thousand branches, twigs, and leaves, that fair fruits may ripen season after season, and that common hands may pluck them. Genius is the electric fire of heaven, mysterious, inscrutable; institutions, laws, formulas, systems, are the terrestrial wires, along which it may penetrate to every town and village, bearing the words of ordinary mortals. By overlooking this two-fold fact, by exaggerating either of its sides, you throw all human history into confusion. Look only to the regulation, and you become the apologist of solecisms, the admirer of mechanism, the defender of form without spirit, the believer in men that are mummies and in armor that is rust. Look only to the force, and your philosophy becomes one not of man but of men. You learn to palliate that sin against the human race by which in all ages national freedom has been crushed under individual strength. You sympathize with expulsions of parliaments and Reigns of Terror. You formalize your fatal, your blasting error, and proclaim it as a truth, under the name of

hero-worship. Napoleon, as may presently appear, can vindicate no claim to have, in his public capacity, wholly and disinterestedly devoted himself to serve France in this best and broadest manner. But as seen by posterity, bearing in the one hand that sword which blazed so fearfully, so irresistibly over Europe, and with the other resting on the Code Napoleon, he will continue to afford a sublime testimony to the two-fold truth, whose practical evolution is the evolution of civilization, that the great man works for his race and that the race must work together.

The Napoleonic empire was one of great advantage to France. That must be allowed at once and emphatically. Napoleon speedily brought all the factions by which the land had been kept in a state of distraction to work harmoniously under his orders, to own the strong gravitation of his genius. "My principle was," he said in St. Helena, "*la carrière ouverte aux talents.*" It is the principle of all prosperous enterprise; and his magnificent success was the natural result of the ability and determination with which he carried it out. Capacity was the one thing he looked for, and the comprehensiveness of perception with which he detected it was marvellous. His soldiers, his marshals, his ministers, were masters of their work; pretence, dreaming, verbiage, he could not tolerate for a moment. He did not himself shrink from labor. His toil was such as makes us amazed at the powers of the human mind and body. While in the field, while directing the motions of large armies on extended lines, while forming combinations that required exact geometric calculation, devising expedients possible only to a mind acting with the most free and tranquil energy, executing movements and operations which demanded exhausting physical endurance, he yet continued to scrutinize every department of the domestic administra-

tion. He placed his crown on a gloomy brow, where thought and care rather than exultation learned to rest; and his seat on the throne of France was not what you would call an easy one. There is a pathos in these words, made use of to O'Meara in St. Helena:—"The happiest days of my life were from sixteen to twenty, during the *semestres*, when I used to go about, as I have told you I should wish to do, from one *restaurateur* to another, living moderately, and having a lodging, for which I paid three louis a month. They were the happiest days of my life. I was always so much occupied, that I may say I never was truly happy upon the throne." Thus he worked, and made all work who owned his authority. The government in every part was a model of industry and energy. The foreign enemies of France trembled before a power, at once fiery in its intensity and perfect in its organization. The subjects of the empire found themselves stimulated, in whatever direction their capacities lay, by the prospect of civic honor. The private soldier, the marshal, the man of art, of science, of industry — every one could gain a place in the legion of honor, if only his excellence in his department were pre-eminent. The treasures of science and the monuments of art enriched and adorned the empire. Well might Frenchmen regard with pride, and the world contemplate with awe and wonder, this consistent and stable structure. From amid the volcanic heavings of the Revolution, it had risen in its strength and massiveness, like a granite mountain, buttressed about with rocks, repressing into submission and silence the fires on which it was based, and beating back proudly the tempests by which it was surrounded.

But there is a negative side to all this, which must be fairly brought into view, before the distinctive feature of the

Napoleonic empire can be defined, or the character of Napoleon accurately determined.

The Napoleonic empire was a despotism. To say so may seem the utterance of a truism; but even if it is so, the truism must be put conspicuously forward. The fair and free development of the human mind in France was interfered with, impeded, constrained. Only such expansion was permitted to the national intellect, only such action allowed to the national will, as were consistent with the purposes of one man. Whatever mind submitted itself or devoted itself to Napoleon might work and prosper; but the sun, moon, and stars of intellect had to leave their natural orbits and do obeisance to him.

Further, the imperial system of Napoleon was specially vitiated by its peculiar adaptation to the purposes of war. It has been said that Napoleon's profoundest instincts acknowledged the paramount nobleness of peace; and this is true. But it has not been alleged that he gave his instincts full play; and the fact is certain, that the whole organization of French imperialism takes the aspect of a martial apparatus. Countless inducements tempted youth into the army. The whole system of education was adapted to the cultivation of military qualities. The conscription compelled all men to regard themselves in the light of possible soldiers. It is not a beautiful spectacle. The very influences which are by their nature pre-eminently pacific, the knowledge and culture whose natural office it is to elevate, to expand, to humanize the mind; brought into the service of hatred, of ferocity, of war: the rain and sunlight not left to fertilize the field and clothe the forest, but set to ripen one vast harvest of dragons' teeth.

This glance at the Napoleonic empire sends us back to  
18\*

look with more searching scrutiny into the character of its founder.

It has been exceedingly common, of late years, to speak of the intellectual and moral nature as identical, to confound intellect, feeling, and conscience in one unity of power. But it is not advisable to reject truth, solely because it is very certain; to rush to paradox, merely because men in general acknowledge plain fact. So manifest is it that conscience, reason, and emotion are not synonymous,—so explicit is the testimony to the possibility of a disturbed balance among these, borne by the Jugurthas, the Syllas, the Borgias, of history—that one cannot but suspect, when their necessarily proportionate soundness and development are insisted on, that the asserter has permitted himself to be deceived by some process of more or less subtle logical legerdemain. It is certain that an infraction of any moral law can be brought out as a negative quantity by the calculation of reason; every crime, be it granted, is a mistake. But this does not justify the assertion, that a powerful intellectual capacity is inconsistent with infraction of the moral law. Mistake may be unconsciously committed under the form of crime, when, were it known or thought of as mistake, it would have been avoided. The whole meaning and point of the common distinction is, that moral defect or delinquency prevents the reason from coming into free and perfect action: that selfishness clogs it, and lets it not gain that high, pure pinnacle, whence it could have swept a sufficiently wide horizon; that impotence of conscience seals its eye, and permits it not to see the chariots of fire, the horsemen, and the spearmen, the unsuspected, unnoticed difficulties and dangers, with which seemingly innoxious crime is filling the air around it. No refining

will remove from human nature this possibility, from human history this fact. As well attempt to prove that, the higher you ascend the Alps, the more broad and luxuriant are the cornfields, the softer and brighter the roses. Jura and Mont Blanc are high and strong; but their lofty precipices are very bare, and they are covered with unmelted snow. This, as well as most other phenomena of nature's scenery, has its analogue in the world of man.

The intellect of Napoleon Bonaparte was of a supreme order; but the moral and emotional nature, conscience and feeling, were not in proportionate power. This mal-adjustment was the essential feature of his character, and wrought his ruin. It found its natural counterpart in his imperial system.

After the conclusive handling the subject has received from Mr. Carlyle, and especially from Mr. Emerson, it will hardly now be maintained that there was not some dark and baneful taint in the character of Napoleon. It may be exhibited with precision under one or two particulars.

It is impossible, first of all, to acquit him of a guilt for which it were difficult to find another name but murder. Explanation might suffice in one or two cases. But the savage extermination of the later Italian campaigns; the deliberate order that thirteen hundred Arab prisoners who had received quarter should be shot; the slaughter of D'Enghien and Palm: these are things which cannot be explained away. Those hands will never wash white.

After murder may be ranked blasphemy. A great many superfine things have been said about Napoleon's fatalism, and his rejection of the materialistic logic which argued that there was no God. But really his fatalism was little more than a kind of thunder behind the scenes; less for use than effect. He did not let fate fight his battles for

him. He did not commit himself very trustfully to fate, in that early campaign, which lasted seven days, in which he flew along the ridges of the Tyrol and the banks of the Italian rivers like fire glittering and darting among the clouds, and during which he destroyed forty thousand Austrians without taking off his boots! Fate seemed to have agreed with Dessaix that Marengo was a battle lost; but Napoleon took the liberty to believe that it was a battle won. If he did not use many precautions to secure his person against assassination, it was not, however he might assert it, because of any confidence in the dispositions of fate: it was simply because he considered the omission of such precautions as safe as their observance. In St. Helena, he put off the doctors, having no confidence in medicine, with reference to fate: but he was careful that the state of his stomach should be communicated to his son. Had fate forgotten *him*? Napoleon did not whimper, or betray a weak surprise, when overtaken by disaster; but that had far more to do with trust in himself, and general strength of character, than with trust in fate. His belief in the existence of God may mean more or less. It probably comes to little more than an attestation to the fundamental human instinct that the First Cause of the Universe is mind. In any view it cannot be alleged in his commendation. Belief in a God without either trembling or worshipping, is a reasonable condition for no finite being.

"There are so many different religions or modifications of them," remarked Napoleon, seemingly in a light and careless mood, in St. Helena, "that it is difficult to know which to choose. If one religion had existed from the beginning of the world, I should think that to be the true one." Not in that way was the bridge of Lodi passed: not in that way was the sword of Austerlitz or of Jena

bared and sheathed. By close, earnest, self-subduing study, by indomitable, sleepless attention, did he perfect himself in the science, and master the art, of war. Strange, that he should have thought a question of which the mere statement involved infinitudes of consequence, might be so lightly shuffled aside, while the concerns of the poor three-score years and ten rose into immeasurable importance, shutting out the heavenly constellations, and sternly concentrating within their narrow space his whole immortal energies! The words may be remembered, with those of Tacitus and Suetonius, as showing how utterly limitless is the possibility, even for great minds, to mistake the nature and relative importance of things. Contemplated from the stillness of eternity, will it not seem *reasonable*, that Napoleon should have bent his giant intellect to solve that great problem which thus flitted faintly and momentarily before him, and passed away forever? In other things, he was so little of a skeptic! A thousand blunders and disasters in war did not conceal from him the possibility of its once more becoming defined and successful, through determination and capacity. Spectacles of poltroonery, corruption, falsehood, unprecedented, perhaps, since the fall of the Roman empire, did not make him skeptical of building up a great, compact, commanding empire. But here he let a whiff of air blow him from the firm land, to drift off on a dark and shoreless sea. Apply his rule generally, and you put a stop to all work, you paralyze the right hand of humanity. All truth comes with difference of opinion; all success is rescued from failure. Generalize from error, and you will believe in no truth: generalize from failure, and you will never stir from the spot on which you stand. But the power of rejecting the generalization of skepticism is the mark of a great practical man; the believer, the hoper,

is the man who advances the standard of the race; and this is well enough recognized; only in the case of religion are men apt to accept the skeptical generalization at a glance. Napoleon did not think it worth his while to look: and so it was not given him to catch sight of that one religion, which *does*, like a thread of celestial, imperishable gold, lie along the whole vista of human history.

Levity, however, in passing by this great enquiry, though beyond question indicative of a mind in which the authority of conscience was not duly acknowledged, is not the crime with which it is intended chiefly to charge Napoleon. It is in another application that use is made of the word blasphemy. He was the first potentate who, deliberately disbelieving the Christian religion, yet deliberately took it and made it a stool on which, while seated on his throne, to set his foot. For state purposes, he deliberately and with perfect heedfulness, put into the hand of Christ a sceptre which was but a reed, and set on Him a royal robe recognized as a mockery. Hitherto the Christian religion had not been used as a Cagliostro might use a spectral illusion, or a mystery of sulphur and saltpetre, purely as a sham, entirely for effect. The door of the apartment in which Napoleon worked would be thrown open of a Sunday for a few minutes, while in a farther room, a mass was being said or sung. Next morning, all the papers had it that the emperor had attended divine service. It was an insult to God and man: a lie to earth, a lie to heaven. The practically atheistic character has adhered to the Bonapartist dynasty. That prayer, offered up on occasion of the baptism of the present imperial prince, in which Louis Napoleon and Eugenie, representing magnanimity and charity, were recommended to God as furnishing the model of a perfect character for the scion of the race, was a marvel-

lous intensification of blasphemy; an improvement even on the stage mass. But is it not a fact to strike one dumb, that men calling themselves Christian priests have been found in our time to lend themselves to these performances?

There may be men bold enough, blind enough, or bad enough, to extenuate or deny Napoleon's guilty unconcern in the shedding of blood: and to accuse any modern monarch or statesman of blasphemy, in enslaving or insulting Christianity and its ordinances, has in these days almost an antiquated look; but no denial or palliation is to be apprehended in relation to the third great charge to be brought against Napoleon, that he unhesitatingly and systematically made use of falsehood, that he habitually told lies. To prove this is entirely superfluous. Its recognition, even in France, is embodied in the phrase, false as a bulletin; and to exhibit it in the comprehensiveness with which it applied to all parts of his existence and activity, to his government, to his war, to his conversation, would be to pass his whole history in review. He deliberately took falsehood into his service; he enrolled, as nearly as possible, the devil in his legion of honor. The central virtue, the keystone of the moral arch, is truth. The Christian God is the God of truth; and the devil is primarily and emphatically the father of lies. To say, therefore, that a man is a liar, is to say that the banner has been in his case taken from the hand of God's standard-bearer on earth, conscience, that his moral nature is in anarchy. Mr. Carlyle expressly affirms that Napoleon was a liar; he also asserts the necessary conformity, nay, the identity, of the moral and intellectual natures: was Napoleon, then, a fool? Our literature has gone too far in the direction of paradox and puzzle.

Such is the result of an inquiry into the character of

Napoleon, keeping specially in view the region presided over by conscience. But the emotional nature is capable of distinction, from the province of conscience on the one hand, and from that of pure intellect on the other. To know, to worship, to love; reason, conscience, charity: these may be said to exhaust the capacities and qualities of man; the will being looked upon as the generalissimo which marshals all the powers of the mind, and brings them out to battle. Napoleon lacked the right imperial mantle, charity.

This is clearly exhibited in the mode in which he extended his conquests over Europe; specially in the way in which he treated prostrate antagonists and nations. So early even as in his Italian campaigns, he had exhibited a dark and perilous implacability in his dealings with Venice. To offend or insult him was, during his whole career, to incur destruction. His wrath might tarry, but that was only because he had a consciousness that it could not cool. His conduct to the Duke of Brunswick and the kingdom of Prussia was that of a nature too stern, cold, unloving. His breast was not wide enough or warm enough for a nobly philanthropic scheme of empire: you would say he rather loved to see the victim writhing under his heel. It may be argued that it was beyond his power really to do anything for Poland: but at all events, faithfully as the Poles served him, no quickening warmth fell over Poland from the cold glimmering of that solitary star.

The bareness of Napoleon's nature, his steely indifference to the melting touches of human sympathy, is suggested, in a very painful and melancholy manner, by several of his conversations in St. Helena. His declarations that he had loved no one may go for little; perhaps they tell on the other side. But it is appalling to mark how all interest and importance seem to him to concentrate in

himself: how the principal point of eulogy to be conferred on his very mother appears to be the entireness of her devotion to him. "Never yet, I believe," he said, "has there been such devotion shown by soldiers as mine have manifested for me. In all my misfortunes, never has the soldier, even when expiring, been wanting to me — never has man been served more faithfully by his troops. With the last drop of blood gushing out of their veins, they exclaimed, *Vive l'Empereur!*" Yet there never seems to have escaped him a single sentiment of pity for all those myriads that had died for him. One can imagine, on some still, sleepless midnight, when the moan of the Atlantic made the silence seem more deep and melancholy, the soldiers that had died for Napoleon, that had followed him so faithfully from Montenotte to Beresina, rising before him for a last review, trooping past in their millions, pale and shadowy, and casting on him, from those eyes in which eternity had written its earnestness, an amazed, upbraiding look. But there is no evidence that he ever conceived such a look as possible. It seemed right, appropriate, quite in the order of things, that men and nations should bleed for him. Humanity recoils from such ghastly self-deification. The snow-clad mountain stands alone.

Napoleon was not naturally of an evil nature: nay, when you glance over his youth, with its manly frankness, its democratic ardor, its touches of romance, you feel that naturally he was nobler than all save a few men of that time. But the greatest and truest nature cannot escape the influences by which it is surrounded; and the youth and early manhood of Napoleon were encompassed by influences that might have chilled the heart of an angel, and turned to cynicism the openness of a celestial brow. It was the time when materialistic philosophy and senti-

mental morality had brought out, in fullest manifestation, their dire brood, lust and lies. It is doubtful whether, in any age of paganism, Napoleon would not have met with more to exalt him above self and the present, and to inform him that the world of sight is not, as those vain babblers, singularly satirizing themselves, used to call it, the universe. Everything he saw in public life, except the mere valor of his soldiers in the field, combined to impress him with a contempt for human nature. Traitors, hypocrites, embezzlers, liars, scoundrels—such were the men by whom he knew himself to be surrounded, and whom he yoked to his car of empire with about as much respect as he would have felt for a team of wolves. Barras, by whom he rose, he knew to be utterly dishonest, a coward, a thief; Fouché was, in his own words, “a miscreant of all colors;” from Talleyrand and Sieyes down to Barrere, there was no man, or hardly one, whom he could esteem. With the whole spiritual universe representing itself to him as a doubt, a triviality, a matter to be laughed at or sniffed lightly aside, and with the world of man awakening only his contempt, was it so much to be wondered at that his nature cased itself in ice, that he became the friendless, unloving being, who saw in men only his tools, and for whom there was no God but his star?

The most cursory glance at the leading events which preceded and accompanied the fall of Napoleon, will show that it was this incompleteness, this bareness of strength, this self-worship, which was the radical cause of his ruin. But it must not be forgotten that his rule brought with it benefits. It did so, not merely to France but to Europe. Capacity is always of a value, of a beneficence, which may be pronounced incalculable. The man of power has an instinctive pleasure in doing work well and seeing it well

done; apart from obstructing influences, it is natural for intellect to produce thoroughness and excellence, as it is natural for the stream to bear the barge, or the wind to purify the atmosphere; and in spite of opposing selfishness both the instinct and the fact were illustrated in the history of Napoleon. It is a circumstance, not to be too profoundly pondered, that France was in a more discontented, turbulent, poverty-stricken, every way miserable condition, under the innocent Louis XVI., than under Napoleon. And but a few months since, Count Cavour informed Europe, that the Italian provinces of Napoleon had, under his rule, enjoyed an equality of law, and a general prosperity, such as they have not enjoyed under Austria. There may be an infinite remove between the best despotism and a low species of freedom; but the despotism of imbecility is the most woeful calamity that can fall upon the human race. Colossal intellectual power, unaided by love, unguarded by virtue, was the essential characteristic both of Napoleon and his empire; it was not good, yet not the worst.

The coronation took place in the close of 1804. The power and glory of Bonaparte had not, however, culminated. His ambition was only awaking.

In 1805, after overthrowing Mack, at Ulm, he advanced towards the north with the armies of Austria in flight before him. Vienna opened her gates. Massena drove the Archduke Charles from Italy. In the month of November, Napoleon was drawing towards Austerlitz, where the emperors of Austria and Russia, with their combined army, dared at last to await him. The story of the wily Carthaginian, opposing the invisible might of his genius, to the vast material power, and blundering courage of the Roman, and luring him on to the tremendous catastrophe of Cannæ, must occur to one who marks Napoleon, leading on the

emperors towards the fearful snare of Austerlitz. And is it not the Napoleon of Italy we see, as that figure passes on horseback along the lines at midnight, to see that all is ready for the morning, an hour's sleep by a watch-fire having first refreshed the imperial soldier?

The victory of Austerlitz laid Austria prostrate before Napoleon; and when he returned to France, vassal thrones, filled by the Napoleon kindred, had begun to twinkle here and there over Europe.

The year 1806 saw another nation overcome. It was against Prussia that the flight of the irresistible eagles was this time directed. Bewildering the Prussian king and his generals, by the novelty and rashness of his combinations, by the breathless speed of his assaults, Napoleon brought the force of the kingdom finally to bay at Jena; and shattered it to fragments. Here again, we have a glimpse of the incomparable, indomitable worker, whose brain neither victory nor ambition seemed able to heat. His heavy train had not arrived, and the battle was to take place next morning. But the eye of Napoleon, seeing what it brought with it the power of seeing, fell upon a rocky plateau, on which no one had ever thought of placing guns, but on which even a few would have an extraordinary effect. He became in a moment the artillery officer of Toulon. He set his men to cut a road for the guns through the rocks, encouraged them by the offer of large sums of gold for every piece brought into position, and spent the whole night among them superintending the work. The victory of Jena was the reward. This "child of fortune" was of that petulant, overbearing kind, which force the fickle mother to take them in her arms.

Two circumstances of evil omen have to be noticed at this point.

The first is that display of imperiousness, insolence, and cruelty, exhibited towards the royal family and the people of Prussia, as well as every one who dared to counteract his projects, which at this time instilled into the breast of the German race that exasperation, that rage, that sense of injustice and insult, with which it came fixedly to regard Napoleon, and which, bursting at length into flame, proved unquenchable.

The second is the promulgation of the Berlin decrees, which took place during his short residence at Berlin in 1806, and corresponded with that of the decrees of Milan. These famous edicts instituted the continental system of Napoleon, one of his darling schemes, and illustrating, even though based in an erroneous idea, the decision and comprehensiveness of that extraordinary mind. With that piercing sagacity which distinguished him, he had seen into the fact, that the only European power which presented to him a front really and wholly unassailable, was Great Britain. By one of those magnificent strokes in which the drama of nature surpasses, in boldness of contrast and gorgeousness of decoration; the drama of fiction, Napoleon was made aware almost at the same moment, of the victory of Austerlitz and the defeat of Trafalgar. It was as if the sun had risen full and bright, touching his diadem with brighter gold; and on the instant, from the opposite quarter of the heavens, the levin brand had leapt out, and scorched half his crown into blackness. He perceived that England could not be attacked by sea. The only hope was to attack her by land. And the mode in which he concluded this was to be done was determined by his conception of the cause of British greatness.

He imagined the power and wealth of Britain to depend wholly on the sea; that she resembled Tyre, Carthage,

Venice, and the other maritime powers. This was a mistake. Tyre, Carthage, and Venice became great through mercantile talent and advantage of situation. They possessed, within themselves, no other natural centres of wealth and population. Their position, therefore, was precarious. But Great Britain is *by nature* a rich country, and would remain thickly peopled though the rest of the world were ocean or desert. It possesses within it more rich and varied sources of natural wealth, more numerous centres of population, than perhaps any equal space on the face of the earth. A fruitful soil, iron, coal, wood: these make her independent of other lands. She strikes her huge tap-roots among the iron and coal, far beneath the surface of the sea. Of this Napoleon had no idea. He believed that if he ruined her commerce, he ruined herself. And how did he propose to ruin her commerce? By a method which might certainly have checked a portion of her export trade; but which flung back civilization itself on the continent of Europe; and inflicted intolerable hardship on the European nations. He proposed to close every continental market against British produce. In order to weaken the mercantile navy of Great Britain, and produce some clamors among her people, for no more than this could he effect, he demanded the sacrifice of nearly the whole commercial navies of the continent, and brought upon the populations of the several countries extreme distress. It seems never to have dawned upon him that there is in trade a precise equation, a geometrical balance, which it is absurd even in imagination to suppose unequal. *Why* does nation trade with nation? Because *each* is advantaged. Buyer and seller are, and must be, convertible terms. The buyer wants, and comes where he can find; the seller has, and sells; by degrees the seller brings the goods which are wanted to the

door of the buyer; and that is an export trade. Napoleon made war upon the sellers of England; but most of these could go elsewhere, or have their goods consumed at home; he made war also and equally upon the buyers of Europe; which brought such oppression and calamity over the various countries, that they groaned under his shadow as under the shadow of death. History does not show a more express or instructive exhibition, of the bearing of one kind of knowledge upon another, of the danger in great practical undertakings, or the formation of great theories, of ignorance of the great fundamental laws which govern *any* province of human affairs.

The year 1808 is signalized, in the history of Napoleon, by the opening of what he himself named the Spanish ulcer. In spite of the objections which were to be urged, on grounds of political expediency, to an interference in Spanish affairs, objections which did not escape Fouché and Talleyrand, it may be considered doubtful, whether to mere intellectual perception, the impolicy of the measure was obvious. It was of the highest importance to Napoleon to reduce to utter humiliation every branch of the house of Bourbon. His views on England required the command of the whole sea-coast of Europe. The heroic resistance of the Spanish people could hardly have been anticipated. Most important of all, no sign had appeared on the horizon, unless, indeed, Napoleon had happened to turn his eye on Assaye in the far East, to indicate that Britain possessed a general able to contend with the imperial marshals; while the irresolution and incapacity of the British administration of the war made it natural to conclude that, except on one element, its opposition could not be formidable. Historical fact corresponds with this view of the case. The Spanish conquest might be considered

complete, when Wellington appeared with untrammelled powers, on the scene. It was with great difficulty that the latter managed to work his way to free and resolute action, through the terror of military superiors, overawed, seemingly, like all Europe, by the fame of the French troops, and through the apprehensions of London aldermen, who thought this fiery and reckless young general was going to ruin everything. As soon as it became evident that Britain too possessed one of the select warriors of human history, the Spanish ulcer became indeed a serious matter. But this was hidden in the future. Meanwhile one thing only was evident;—that the treachery and usurpation of Napoleon's dealings with Spain were an infraction of the eternal laws of conscience and of mercy, a deliberate and stupendous sin. He did not *see* how this should work his woe; he did not *perceive* that he was sowing the wind; intellect was wide awake; but there came no word from conscience to hint that this was baleful seed: it was sown; and the unexpected whirlwind came.

The affairs of Spain seeming in a prosperous condition, Napoleon turned again northwards. In the spring of 1809, Austria declared war. The campaign which followed was attended with the same success as had marked all Napoleon's wars with the house of Hapsburg. Never did the genius of the great soldier shine forth more conspicuously. War was declared on the sixth of April. Napoleon's armies were comparatively few, and lying dangerously apart. But as if at the waving of a magician's wand, they came together, and bore down upon the enemy. On the twentieth of the month, there was one defeat; on the twenty-first, another; on the twenty-second, the army of the Archduke Charles, 100,000 strong, was utterly broken and routed. This was the victory of Eckmühl. The con-

queror again entered Vienna. On the sixth of July was won the crowning victory of Wagram. War had been declared precisely three months before; and now the great Austrian monarchy lay once more, powerless and gasping, at the feet of the terrible soldier. Prussia and the whole German land had heard the sound of war on the Danube, with a listening and surmise, of awe and apprehension not unmingled with hope. As a victim in the swoon of death, catching sounds of attempted rescue, might show a heaving of the breast and a quivering of muscle, the nation gave here and there a sign of life and awakening: but as that victim, at the sight of the murderer's knife, reeking with new gore, and in the glance of his eye lit with new triumph, might sink back into stupor, so it drew one deep sigh and settled back into submission. The conviction sank deep into the mind of Europe that this Napoleon was actually invincible.

Nor can this result excite surprise. If you follow the career of this wonderful man, from Montenotte to Wagram, if you watch the flight of his eagles from the pyramids to the Niemen, if you estimate the genius displayed in the campaign of Marengo, in the campaign of Austerlitz, in the campaign of Jena, in the campaign of Friedland, in the campaign of Wagram, you pause in awe and astonishment at the unexampled spectacle. In these ages there has been no such display of the strange and magnificent energy of mind vanquishing material difficulty.

The greatness and glory of Napoleon now reached their point of culmination. Allied to the royal house of Austria, with none north of the Pyrenees daring to lift up a hand against him, with vassal kings on this hand and on that, an army habituated to conquer at his absolute command, and a king of Rome slumbering on his knee, he seemed placed be-

yond the shafts of fortune, on the last glittering peak of human attainment. This was in 1810. Fifteen years before, he had been the unnoticed artillery officer, his idea of happiness, a decent house in Paris and a cabriolet, with only here and there a piercing eye to discern that under the soiled uniform there lurked one of the immortals.

But his fall was sudden, headlong, irretrievable.

Napoleon had begun himself to be the prey of that fierce passion, that intense steady-burning ambition, which had already made so fair a portion of the world its prey. He had not hitherto found empire the pledge of happiness. As his ambition strengthened, his brow had darkened and his eye filled with a more stern and anxious earnestness. He was not now that Napoleon who had addressed the army of Italy, his eye clear and bright, hope and victory on his crest. Ambition and empire had marked themselves on his brow in lines of care. It seems one of nature's grand appointments, that all wild, distempered things take a garment of gloom, of sadness; that peace, health, and beauty dwell together. The light announces its presence in a smile diffused over the whole face of nature: but the samiel wraps itself in the purple mist of the desert: and it is in the lurid cloud that the electric spark lies hid. Napoleon's ambition had passed all healthy stages; at each draught of the maddening chalice, his thirst had become greater; and now, beneath his imperial diadem, his eye cast a troubled and ominous glare. It seems probable that, at this time, the thought of universal dominion actually had hold upon his mind. At all events, there was still one thorn which pierced him to the heart. Britain still defied him. One power remained which had never trembled at his name or done him the least obeisance. The bitterness of the pang which this knowledge occasioned was rendered

more intense by a slight but galling mixture of apprehension. He could not feel his very throne secure, until this enemy, of boundless wealth, of indomitable pertinacity, and whose supreme maritime dominion made it impossible for him with all his power to do so much as throw ten thousand men from Italy to Sicily, was effectually humbled. In one last continental struggle, he would overwhelm Russia, and then, having crippled Great Britain by the operation of the Berlin and Milan decrees, he would bring all the fleets and armies of Europe, to annihilate, at one fell swoop, the power and independence of the contumacious Island.

Russia was ready for war. The Austrian match had damped the cordiality which had long subsisted between the Czar and the Emperor. The continental system was becoming intolerable. The gradual confirmation and extension of the power of Napoleon on the Polish territory was looked upon with apprehension. Enough: the Czar was prepared for hostilities. In the summer of 1812, Napoleon concentrated his armies for the great Russian expedition.

Much has been said, and perhaps somewhat vaguely, on the subject of the Russian campaign, and the particular error committed by Napoleon in engaging in it or carrying it on. He trusted presumptuously in fate; he entered into conflict with the elements; and so on. Not at all. He looked as cautiously after the helping of fate now, as he had done at Friedland, or Eckmühl. "I was," he said to O'Meara in St. Helena, "a few days too late—I had made a calculation of the weather for fifty years before, and the extreme cold had never commenced until about the 20th of December, twenty days later than it began this time." That man left nothing to fate. His intellect was still clear. This early setting in of the cold was the first great cause, in

his own belief, of the failure of the Russian attempt; the second was the burning of Moscow. Human prescience could have anticipated neither.

The truth is, Napoleon committed one great error in this Russian expedition, and, so far as appears, but one. He did not preserve his rear; he did not secure his retreat. If you look closely into his former campaigns, you find, with the exception, perhaps, of Marengo, no battle which does not exhibit the most cautious circumspection in securing a retreat. He fell back instantly, though seemingly on the way to victory, if, as at Aspern, his communications in the rear were broken. He always made it a grand object to cut off the retreat of his antagonist; once he had his enemy in a position where defeat was ruin, he attacked with confidence as one sure of an outwitted prey. In St. Helena, he charged the Duke of Wellington with defective generalship at Waterloo, because, as he alleged, the allied army had no means of retreat. But now his own retreat was insecure: defeat was destruction. He passed across Europe towards the north, accompanied not by the blessings and good wishes, but by the suppressed indignation and muttered curses, of its peoples. Fear and amazement guarded his throne, not love and seemly reverence. No human being is strong enough to despise these. Men now watched him with eyes of menace, and with right hands on the hilt. Disaffection had spread deep and far. His imperiousness, his insolent haughtiness, had turned against him even Bernadotte to whom he had given his baton, even Lucien who had served him so well, even the vassal kings on whom he conferred a humiliating grandeur. France was becoming weary and sick at heart; even glory became cold in its glittering, when there seemed to be no end of war, and when it might almost be said that in every

house there was one dead. He took with him, too, his Grand Army, his old invincibles, that would so proudly die for him; and who could never be replaced. To all or almost all this, he was blinded. The greatest and most important part of it arose from moral causes and *so escaped him.*

The story of the Russian campaign is the most solemn and tragic in the annals of modern warfare, if not in the whole history of war. No poet of these times, so far as one may judge, has possessed a power necessary to its poetic delineation. Perhaps in their very highest moments, Coleridge, Shelley, or Byron might have caught certain of its tints of gloom and grandeur; now and then, a tone of melody from Mrs. Browning's harp may reach the epic height of its sublimity. But he who depicted the woe of Othello and the madness of Lear, and he who described the march of the rebel angels to the north along the plains of heaven, might have joined their powers to bring out, in right poetic representation, the whole aspects of the Russian campaign. Perhaps it may lie among those subjects for which common life affords no precedent, and common language no words. And, indeed, no description seems necessary. The poetry of nature, in its weird colors and deep, dark, rhythmic harmonies, is already there; we have but to open our eyes and contemplate it. Those brave soldiers, those dauntless, devoted veterans, those children of victory, swift as eagles, fearless as lions, who had charged on the dikes of Areola, and hailed the sun of Austerlitz, who were the very embodiment of wild southern valor, following Napoleon, the son of the lightning, beneath the dim vault of the northern winter, there to lay their fire-hearts under that still, pale winding-sheet of snow the northern blast singing over them its song of stern and

melancholy triumph: what could be more sublime poetry than that? It is simple fact. Then, how grandly is the darkness broken, as those flames touch all the clouds with angry crimson, and a great people, thrilling with a heroic emotion, lays in ashes its ancient cities rather than yield them up to an invader. Worthy flowers to be cast by a nation in the way of that emperor! "It was the spectacle," said Napoleon in St. Helena, alluding to the conflagration of Moscow, "It was the spectacle of a sea and billows of fire, a sky and clouds of flame; mountains of red rolling flames, like immense waves of the sea, alternately bursting forth and elevating themselves to skies of fire, and then sinking into the ocean of flame below. Oh, it was the most grand, the most sublime and the most terrific sight the world ever beheld!" A sublime sight indeed; it were difficult to name one more sublime: unless it were the sight of *him* describing it, a hopeless captive in that lonely isle.

It is needless to linger on the closing scenes of the imperial drama. The events of the campaigns of 1813 and 1814 have been already fore-shadowed. Europe rose upon Napoleon, like a bristling lion, gnashing its teeth in fury and hatred. Men who had followed him in the field, or had acted under his order, who had learned to guess, not at any particular kind of tactics, but at the working of his mind, were arrayed against him. Bernadotte and Moreau did more to vanquish him than all the generals of the coalition. His combinations and designs were anticipated, and only by combinations could he hope to contend against those overwhelming odds. France beheld his disaster with the indifference of exhaustion. It was a case in which no conceivable power of intellect or resolution could have availed him. Yet in his whole career there is no period in

which his genius and character were more strikingly displayed, in which our wonder and admiration more constantly attend him. Even the hosts that were overpowering him paid him the most expressive tribute. They feared to meet himself. The conviction was immovable, that some mystic character of invincibility attached to him individually. Nor was the belief unreasonable; in hardly any case did he actually come into collision with his foes, without their retiring, bleeding and discomfited, from his terrible gripe. But even victory was fatal to him; his antagonists could afford more blood in defeat than he in victory. And wherever he was not himself present, they were victorious.

Napoleon has been severely reprimanded for the blind and dogged obstinacy with which he clung to empire and prolonged a hopeless conflict. It were difficult to obviate these reprobations. And yet is it easy to resist a feeling of sympathy with that unconquerable spirit, as those enemies, whom, severally, he had so often vanquished, bore down upon him together? It was an epic ending. So dauntless, so indomitable did he stand, firm as adamant to the last:—

Like a statue thunder-struck,  
Which, though quivering, seems to look  
Right against the thunder-place.

Of Elba, and the brief meteoric gleam of the hundred days, it is needless to speak. Napoleon had fallen, and, in the Europe of 1815, it was impossible to rise.

So he was borne over the ocean to St. Helena. There he remained; on his death-bed: for he died day by day, during those weary and mournful years. Sad it is to mark that royal mind preying on itself, the old irresistible ener-

gies eating away their own case. One could weep for the hero of Toulon and Lodi, the victor of Rivoli and Wagram, the mightiest emperor since Charlemagne, bickering there about names and shadows with Sir Hudson Lowe. But sympathy must not degenerate into sentimentality; a reasonable compassion will buttress itself on the strength of fact. Napoleon's idea of empire was behind the age; not Christian; outraging those instincts, which, even with Christianity abjured in name, cannot wholly leave the hearts of once Christian nations. That old conception of Atlas, one stupendous giant upholding the earth, was not the highest: the world is sustained by the chains of gravitation, wrapping it all around, and more invisible than the sunbeams. The progress of humanity is *from* the pyramid; towards the cottage.

Of the general result of the Napoleonic wars, and the bearing of the first empire on the progress of civilization, there is not much to be said. Regarding the course of determined opposition taken, throughout, by Great Britain, and at last adopted by the government, and far more nobly by the people of Russia, a fair and deliberate investigation leaves no room for two opinions. That men should court platform effect, by ringing changes on the expenditure incurred by Great Britain in the restoration of the Bourbons, that men, not desirous of producing any such effect, but biassed by particular opinions, should yield assent to the same view, this is conceivable and natural enough; but that men professedly despising popular opinion, men of piercing insight and accurate knowledge, should give in to so empty a common-place, should speak of Britain as struggling, during those years, to suppress the French revolution, or any "fact" of the kind, is truly wonderful. Britain made peace with a revolutionary government: that is a

fact; and it settles the question. England would all along have been too glad to cultivate pacific relations with any cabinet in Paris, which did not threaten the total overturn of European relations and its own national existence. The Bourbons were not restored at the peace of Amiens: it was not for their restoration that Britain again took arms and fought on till the peace of Vienna. Britain made war against that great enemy, the inmost desire of whose soul was her subjugation. Warring for nothing, warring for the suppression of the French Revolution, designed in whatsoever councils! The coasts of France were lined with armies ready to land on Britain; the bays of France were covered with vessels to bring them across: and to the last day of his life, it was the deliberate belief of Napoleon, that the attack might have been successful. Great Britain played in those years a noble part, and one from which it would have been cowardice and infatuation to shrink: it is not seemly for the next generation after that which fought the long, stern battle, to begin to sneer! Since the wars of Marlborough, there has been no such epic period in the history of England. And in the magnificent prosperity which has attended her since, there may be found the natural reward of her constancy and courage.

It is not so easy, it seems, indeed, impossible, to discern how the Napoleonic empire has aided in the evolution of right civilization, what place it occupies in the scheme of a beneficent Providence. The cycles of the world are slow. Divine purposes may come to light after many days, which for the present are shrouded in darkness. But hitherto there appears to be little result from all that bloodshed; the battle-field of Europe has not yet grown green. Grant that the fetters of caste have been broken, that a certain social equality has been realized on the continent, that the

French Revolution occasioned and the power of Napoleon secured these things. Is not, nevertheless, the aspect of European civilization, nay in some respects the aspect of universal civilization, gloomy and discouraging? Despotism, dark, strong, humiliating despotism, reigning on the continent; the brain of Europe, its free intellectual and moral power, smitten by that baleful enchantment, the arm of Europe, its industrial energy, fettered and constrained: Jesuitism, following Despotism, shedding pestilence where there already is night:—such is the literal spectacle presented by the continent. Freedom is indeed still in vigor, nay, in nascent vigor, in Britain and America. But do these great peoples fully understand and accept their mission? Do they unite to proclaim to mankind the blessing and the glory of that liberty by which they are distinguished? Do their mutual intelligence, their sympathy, their brave co-operation, woven together into one bow of peace, striding from shore to shore of the Atlantic, write in characters of power and beauty the vindication of freedom? The answer cannot be wholly affirmative.

## VII.

### PLATO.

CASTING a rapid glance over the generations of mankind, in their path over the stage of time to the stillness of eternity, we discern, for the most part, but a general, confused company, marching steadily on, undistinguishable save in the mass; as when we see a host in the distance, the individuals are lost in the general body, and we can discern with distinctness only a few, the leaders and standard-bearers of the army; round these, the various battalions are ranged, and march under their banners. One of the greatest of these standard-bearers we mean at present, for a brief space, to contemplate.

The assertion that history and biography are one, we must pronounce an error. That history is the condensation or essence of countless biographies, we must also, whatever Mr. Emerson says, declare erroneous. Biography treats of the individual; history treats of the mass; and the laws which govern each are diverse. This we can at present stay neither to prove at length, nor to unfold in detail; but remark that there is, in the oft-repeated observation touching the identity of history and biography, such an approach to truth, as to account for, and render plausible, the error. Biography and history are intimately, all but inextricably, intertwined. There can be no doubt that

every great thought which has struck new life into the veins of universal man has been uttered by some individual man; that, in the case of the unfolding of every banner round which the nations have clustered and marched, the proud honor of having upreared it can be claimed by some one among the sons of men. Biography in each case asks, "What was it which the individual did?" History in each case asks, "How was the mass of men affected by his thought or action?" Individual great men are to history representative ciphers, by which she denotes certain moving powers of thought or action; national movements are to biography certain great expressive hieroglyphics, by which she calculates the force of her individual great men. If philosophical precision is to be sought at all, they must be kept distinct. Intimately connected truly they are; twin sisters, looking on each other with the kindest smile, both feeding the lamp of knowledge, but pouring their pure oil from different vessels.

The task we propose to ourselves at present partakes both of history and of biography: we desire approximately to ascertain the distinctive characteristics of the man we survey, and to trace his influence upon mankind; to apprehend, in a general way, both the mass and momentum of the force which first caused commotion in the stream of time, and to trace the widening ripples it occasioned.

In the widest distinction, men may be divided into thinkers and actors. Not that thought does not swiftly array itself in armor, and grasp the weapons of action; and not that action is ever effective without a viewless steam power of thought, setting the mechanism in motion; but that the two great classes of men — whom we represent, on the one side, by the Platos, the Homers, the Solons, the Shakspeares, the Newtons; and, on the other, by the Alexanders, the

Cæsars, the Charlemagnes, the Cromwells, and the Napoleons—are set in marked contrast to each other, and present themselves in very different aspects to the eye of the biographer or historian. Nay more, their effects upon the destinies of men are different and distinct in certain grand characteristics. And we may, in passing, hazard the remark, that in our day, while the effect of great thinkers upon human history has been most ably and eloquently exhibited, the effect of great actors has been exhibited with far less adequacy and correctness.

There is but one other remark which we deem it necessary to make, ere proceeding to our subject; namely, that our space utterly prohibits anything like detail or minute portraiture. Our treatment of the questions which we may pass in review must be general. We trust that it shall not, therefore, be vague or valueless; the widest truths are always the most general, and are useless only where they have not their roots soundly imbedded in the particular, and so cease to be truths.

Plato was the greatest thinker of antiquity; he was probably the greatest reflective thinker of all time. Opinions have varied exceedingly regarding him, and, save in great leading characteristics, the student of his works will find difficulty in discerning the features of his philosophy; but all men regard him as the grandest embodiment which the ages have afforded, of one great phase of human thought, and recognize him likewise as the culminating point of that historical epoch in which this phase of the human mind found, perhaps, its most imposing development, the era of Greek philosophy. Plato and Aristotle are the two sages who lead the two great divisions of philosophic thinkers through all time. But Aristotle was the pupil of Plato, and the critic of his system; and even while we accord all

honor to the Stagyrite, we can say that Plato was the centre figure of Greek speculation, that he made all who went before his teachers, and that all who came after were, with more or less of intelligence and originality, his pupils. And this fact at once and directly leads us to our proper mode of procedure on the present occasion; our task shapes itself into the discussion of two questions, the one biographic, the other historic. Respecting Plato himself we ask, What were the distinguishing characteristics of his mind and of his thought? Respecting the philosophy he represented — the distinctive Platonic, as distinguished from the Aristotelian phase of Grecian philosophy — we ask, What was the part it played in human history, and in what light are we now to regard it as a prospective agency?

Plato was born 430 b. c., in *Ægina*, an island in the Saronic Gulf, between Attica and Argolis; or in Athens, for there is a diversity of opinion. His father's name was Ariston, his mother's Perictione, and his own Aristocles. He obtained a Greek education. This is saying much. It implies that every faculty of the intellect, every emotion of the heart, and every capacity of the physical frame, was duly exercised. He excelled in gymnastics; he wrote poetry in his youth, of which some fragments yet remain; and is reported to have composed an epic, which he committed to the flames, on seeing its inferiority to the work of Homer. He studied rhetoric and music.

But the light which was to rivet his eye unchangeably had not yet dawned upon him. He was still a young man, not above twenty, when he heard Socrates; but his destiny, both for himself and for mankind, was thereby and at once fixed. He devoted himself to the search after truth.

The effect of the teaching of Socrates upon the philos-

ophic mind of Greece is clearly definable. Cousin pronounces him to have given it an irresistible impulse in the direction of reflection; he turned it inward: he made thought the king of the world and philosophy subjective. This is true, and perhaps the whole truth; but we neglect a very important element in the Socratic influence, if we overlook the tremendous earnestness with which Socrates sought for truth, the rapt religious devotion with which he sacrificed everything at her shrine, the elevating moral influence he exerted. By the joint endeavors of Grote and Lewes, we may presume that we have now reached the truth concerning the sophists: they were the public, and of course paid educators of Greece, and they were the embodiment of what may be called the morality of polite Greek society. Higher than this they did not go; lower than this it were unfair to place them. But Socrates came forth to voice the holier and intrinsically the more powerful, although too truly the ever-obstructed sympathy, which burns in the human breast, for truth itself, truth pure and abstract, truth arrayed in the unsullied white of heaven, and alluring by no spangle or gold of earth. Truth, he proclaimed, was to be sought for its own sake; and the method by which it was to be sought, was what in its widest sense may be embraced in the term conversation. This conversation, dialectic, might be either audible or inaudible; it might proceed either in the public school-room or in the private chambers of the soul; in either case it proceeded by definition and division, by searching scrutiny and discrimination of the true from the false or irrelevant. The great soul of Plato was at once charmed by the words of Socrates; under the rugged, repulsive form of the dogged, irresistible arguer, he discerned the hallowed and searching fire that is immortally noble, and irresistibly attractive to

the noble: as if his past life had been but a dream or a May-game, he abandoned everything for philosophy, for truth. Not that anything became excluded, but that every thing attained a new relation. The sun was set in his system, a retinue of worlds might circle round it, but every one that could not be bound and regulated by its influence must fly away.

For ten years Plato was the disciple of Socrates. At the death of his master, whom he vainly endeavored to save, he travelled into various lands, and investigated the doctrines of many philosophers: he abode first for a time in Megara, passed thence to Cyrene, thence to Egypt, and, after accumulating what may in general terms be called the whole knowledge of his time, returned to Greece. He opened his school of philosophy in the immortal Academy. He was then about forty years of age. He visited Syracuse three times; on returning from the first visit, he was sold for a slave, but bought by Annicus of Cyrene, and set free: he died at the age of eighty-three, and continued writing, it is said, to the very last.

On the subject of the travels of Plato, there has been much exaggeration and misrepresentation: for our own part, we cannot regard it as anywise improbable that he should push his researches in the east; and the remark of Numenius the Pythagorean, quoted by the writer on Plato in the "Encyclopædia Britannica," "What is Plato but Moses in Attic Greek?" is certainly a strange one: but we deem the subject of slight importance, since the great fact is unquestioned, that Plato embraced in his own mind all that previous or contemporary philosophers could afford him.

And this unfolds to us one great aspect of the mind of Plato, conveying an important lesson to all men of all ages,

and perhaps with special emphasis to the men of this hasty, feverish time. For ten years, between the age of twenty and thirty, he sat at the feet of Socrates; for what we may, speaking roundly, call other ten years, he walked over the world, seeking knowledge wherever it was to be found; and then, with a majesty, becoming one to whom all generations were to listen, he returned to Athens, and opened his mouth under the plane-trees of the grove of Academus. This power of waiting, this silent, dauntless search, not after originality but after truth, showed the intrinsic soundness and strength of the soul of Plato. The grandest originality, too, is thus always won: it takes the arms of a giant, a Titan giant, to bear unswerving a world; our own Milton never staggered under his learning, and Plato bore all his with the calmness of commanding strength.

He is recorded to have been very melancholy. "Plato," says Lewes, whose notice in his "*History of Philosophy*" is a good introduction, though only such, to the study of the great philosopher—"Plato was intensely melancholy. That great, broad brow, which gave him his surname, was wrinkled and sombre. Those brawny shoulders were bent with thought, as only those of thinkers are bent. A smile was the utmost that ever played over his lips; he never laughed. 'As sad as Plato,' became a phrase with the comic dramatists." This melancholy is suggestive of much. Plato had looked abroad over mankind, had grappled with the problems of thought, had witnessed the degraded, prostrate state of the world. He found the intellect of man weak, he saw the majority of men wretched, he beheld passion, often almost brutalized, ruling men. While, therefore, he fixed his eye upon truth and immortality, that eye was shaded by a cloud of sorrow and of doubt. It was no misanthropic egotism that made Plato sad; like the crowned

sage of Israel, he saw that all around him was vanity, and that men would pursue only vanity. He discerned clearly, though it might be that he could not give definite expression to that under a sense of which he labored, the fallen state of humanity. This will appear more obviously in the sequel, but of the fact we are perfectly assured. That is a most striking and suggestive passage in the "Republic," where he speaks of the sowing of virtue in an unkindly soil, and the corruption, by malignant influences, of what is best in human nature into what is worst: it seems to us pointedly and mournfully applicable, as we may be permitted with a slight anticipation to remark, to his whole philosophy. It is not enough that truth be sown by the hand of man or angel upon our bleak, ungenial world; there is not depth or richness of soil to nourish its roots, there is not purity or balminess of atmosphere to bring gently out into fulness of beauty its heavenly blossoms. The hand of "some god" must guard it. So Plato felt; so Christianity says. Well enough to talk of the beauty of truth and the resistless charm that dwells in her eye: truth is a light that shines through a cloudy atmosphere, and the hand of God must be stretched out from heaven to put the clouds aside, ere men can fully or clearly see it. Nay, even when they see it, their weak eyeballs, as Plato magnificently says in his myth of the cave, cannot look upon it fixedly. In fact, Plato saw the great struggle that goes on in the history and heart of man: there is a sympathy and a profound one for the true, the good, the beautiful, and so there is truth in the assertion, that if men saw virtue, they would fall down and worship it: but there are also other sympathies, which supplement the former, and compel us to admit the humiliating fact, that men cannot look upon pure truth or pure virtue undazzled. Plato discerned both facts and

the unaided human intellect could do no more: a greater than Plato was required to cast more light upon the subject.

Plato was, in person, a strong man, but had a weak voice. He was never married. He lived in a region above not only the popular morality and mythology of the age, but above the vast majority of men in all ages. With tremendous strength of will, he bent his mind to the continual contemplation of truth. Below him rolled the turbid streams of mundane passion and endeavor. As he dwelt alone in that lofty and silent dwelling of thought,

“Far off he seem’d to hear the dully sound  
Of human footsteps fall.”

In his youth, his bosom had been filled with human sympathies, which had voiced themselves in passionate melody, and, with all his remorseless dialectics, we believe his mind to have been radically of the poetic type; but his eye caught the gleam of truth, and, irresistibly fascinated by the sight, he compelled his buoyant, exuberant genius to

“Braid his golden locks by Wisdom’s side,”

and walk submissively through life, as her humble servant. All else he scorned with the true philosophic pride. Dionysius, who had caused him to be sold as a slave, trembling for his miserable reputation, hoped Plato would not speak ill of him; Plato “had not leisure to think of Dionysius.” Yet sadness, as we said, descended on his brow; for the state of man was melancholy, and he himself could not but discern that philosophy could not scale the walls of mystery which girdle humanity: gazing ever upward with wistful eye, he still saw

“The sacred morning spread,  
The silent summit overhead,”

and felt, however indistinctly, that he was not

“Nearer to the light  
Because the scale is infinite.”

He looked to death as the gate of entrance to the abode of pure truth, and life was valuable only as it was used by reason in unveiling the realities which lay shrouded under phenomena.

The grand characteristics of Plato's system of thought can be discriminated with sufficient accuracy, and it is to these we must restrict ourselves. We obtain insight into the whole, by considering his idea of knowledge, and the method by which that knowledge was to be attained.

The knowledge of sensation is varying, and not to be relied on; sensation gives us the many, and philosophers must seek the one; there is a “type of perfect in his mind,” which man can find nowhere in visible nature; the knowledge of sense is phenomenal, spectral, merely representative; for true knowledge we must turn to reason: so said Plato. Hence arose his world-famous theory of ideas. These ideas were the original perfect types of things, existing, whether independent of God or not, in a region superior to this world. Lewes, with a very happy and exquisite ingenuity, supposes the objective existence of ideas to have been merely the exercise, in the province of philosophy, of the strong tendency of the Greek mind to project its conceptions into realities; that general terms were formed by Plato, as by all other philosophers and men, and that their independent existence was simply an act of creative imagination. Be this as it may, the fact

is certain, that Plato distinctly enunciates the separate existence of the ideal types of which things are copies; and that this is the central point of his whole philosophy. Knowledge, then, with Plato, meant the perception, in whatever way, of ideas, of the perfect and unchanging types which phenomena bodied forth. To use the words of a very able writer on the subject, "Plato, like a writer of our own time, regarded philosophy as an undressing of the world, as the means of discovering the certainty and the eternity, which are in this world hidden and wrapped up in the garb of the mutable and the temporal."

Such being the theory of knowledge entertained by Plato, how was this knowledge to be attained? The question at once introduces us to his doctrine of reminiscence. The human soul, in a previous state of existence, visited the region of ideas, and the whole object of philosophy is to recall the images seen there. And how can this be done? By reason, aided by sense, or, more strictly, acting upon the information afforded by sense. The phenomena of sense convey somewhat of truth, but, by their multiplicity, diversity, and deviation from the original type, are apt to mislead: sense must submit to reason; dialectic, the exercise of thought by the scrutinizing philosopher, leads to true knowledge. Plato excluded poets from his "Republic," but we imagine he would have listened to the following words of our great reflective poet:—

"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:  
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
And cometh from afar:  
Not in entire forgetfulness,  
And not in utter nakedness,  
But trailing clouds of glory do we come,  
From God who is our home."

The God of Plato is the universal architect of ideas: he created first the types, and then the world as a copy of them; or, (for his opinion varies in various works) ideas were created from all eternity, and independent of God, who merely shaped the world after their model.

We must beware lest we fail utterly to discern the sublimity of this Platonic region of ideas, or the truth it does, after all, embody. Plato saw that nothing was perfect here. Justice never lifted up her voice among men without being obstructed and half silenced by the discordant noises of fraud, and vile cunning, and adverse circumstances. Men, with half-idiotic listlessness, knew virtue to be fair, and good, and heaven-born, and sunk into the harlot-arms of vice. The visage of truth was dimmed by the mists of earth, or, to use the image of Milton, her form was cut into shreds, and the philosopher could only go searching after her members, and endeavor to arrange them into “an immortal feature of loveliness and perfection.” Plato imagined a land where all this was changed; where truth reigned in undimmed splendor, surrounded by justice, and temperance, and love, and all the celestial train. Thence he had come when he arrived upon this world of semblance and shadow; thither, while sojourning here, he would steadfastly look, unheeding the joys or the afflictions of earth; and thither, when death opened the eternal gates, would he return. The truth in all this is the great truth on which Christianity is founded. Thus did the grandest intellect of antiquity, unconsciously to itself, look back to Eden, and forward to Heaven.

We shall glance at one or two phases of Plato's general system.

We have heard much of Platonic love; and, meeting it in the sentimental novel, one is tempted to unite with

Byron in his exclamation, which seems to touch the very sublimity of impudence—

“O Plato, Plato, you’re a bore!”

But the idea was, and is, a sublime one. It meant the union of two individuals by that sympathy which results from, as it occasions, unity of aim, when that aim is the highest to which they can aspire, namely, pure truth. In the soul, Plato saw two motive powers, which he represented under the emblem of two steeds: the one of altogether celestial mettle, snow-white, shapely, mild, swift, and requiring neither whip nor spur: the other of dark hue, of fierce, unkindly temper, and scarcely to be urged on, by Reason the charioteer, with whip or spur; like the steeds of the respective horsemen that joined the wild huntsman of Bürger. These typified, respectively, the sensual, the earthly, the passionate,—and the intellectual, the celestial portions of the soul of man. The noble courser strove ever towards what was holy and high; the base horse sought the excitements of earthly passion. When two individuals agreed mutually to restrain the black steed, and to turn constantly and resolutely the head of the snowy courser to the abodes of truth, a Platonic friendship or love was formed. We think that, when well understood, there is but one nobler idea attainable by man than Platonic love, and that is Christian love; wherein every celestial element of the Platonic flame is embraced, and a truer humanity blended therewith. We imagine the poem of Christian love has not been yet exactly written; we venture the assertion, that the poem of Christian love has not yet been even faintly prefigured; we know not that it has been so much as attempted.

Plato’s views of politics are very interesting, and closely

characterize his system. In that very singular and clever medley, written by Mr. Emerson, and headed "Plato," which contains about as comical a mixture of truth and absurdity as was ever concocted by genius and eccentricity, Plato is pronounced a man of balanced mind. He was a man who could see two sides of a thing; he combined the imagination of Asia with the precision of "result-loving, machine-making Europe." We have afterwards the rather startling intimation contained in the following sentence: "As the poet, too, he is only contemplative." And, glancing onwards, we meet the following: "He did not, like Pythagoras, break himself with an institution. All his painting in the 'Republic' must be esteemed mythical, with intent to bring out, sometimes in violent colors, his thought." We do not deny a poetic element in the mind of Plato; his mind was probably of the Miltonic type, and his great projection of the ideal world we have already characterized in accordance with this theory. But how could a man be only contemplative, who is the fiercest, most searching arguer and analyzer? Imagination, we doubt not, exerted a very strong unconscious influence over his system, but it was allowed to intrude for a moment only as the humble handmaid of truth; and even then, so to speak, it had to take the disguise of dialectic. As to the republic, we utterly repudiate the notion that it was mythical: it was not, indeed, brought to the test of experiment, but, if the voice of history is to be credited, that was simply because Plato could not prevail upon the reigning powers of Syracuse to permit the attempt. The whole tone of the work in which his views are expounded, seems to us absolutely demonstrative of the fact, that Plato was in stern earnest, and would have risked his life for his scheme. Taking this for granted, we remark, that, as to Plato being

a man who possessed a balanced mind, and so forth, the observations of Mr. Emerson have certainly some truth, but convey an utterly inadequate and vague idea. In a sense, nothing was too little for the attention of Plato, because everything, however insignificant, might awaken some remembrance of the former residence of the soul, might afford some glimpse of the essential truth of an idea. But, in order at all to conceive the true position of Plato among the thinkers of the world, we must contrast him with Aristotle, and Bacon, and all that other great class which they represent; and we then discern that his distinctive character was, that he did not, so much as Aristotle, or by any means so much as Bacon, embrace that great side of things, which is the actual as distinguished from the ideal, the present as distinguished from the past and the future, the finite as contrasted with the infinite. If this great distinction is to be maintained; if the one class is that which subjects nature to reason, and the other that which subjects reason to nature; if there is a difference between the ideal construction of a world from the copies of ideas, and the humble examination of a world by the interpreter of nature; if Coleridge's remark, that all men are born followers either of Plato or of Aristotle, is other than sheer unmixed absurdity, then Plato was not a man who, in this sense, saw both sides of the matter, but the embodiment of *one* great phase of the human mind. Clearing away every notion of that mythical theory of Mr. Emerson's, let us see how Plato constructs his state, as contrasted with the manner in which we may suppose Bacon to have gone about a similar undertaking.

Bacon at once opens his great embracing eye upon nature. He listens to the voices of history. He hears every exclamation of the mob, and watches the gleam in every eye

He enters the senate-house; he attends the criminal and civil court; he follows the host to the battle-field. He studies man in the mass; the great national aggregations into which humanity has been grouped; the minor movements of united masses, bound together by some tie of religious or political motive, as the Assassins, the orders of monkery and knighthood, the Jesuits; the influence of churches and superstitions. He studies man most carefully in the family; the tree of which the national forest is composed, and the healthfulness of the whole determined. He looks scrutinizingly at man as an individual; he asks how individual and national motives act and re-act upon each other; he weighs the force of patriotism against interest, of private affection against public good. He regards everything as already virtually determined for him; his grand problem is to produce harmonious action among elements already existing; he turns reverently to nature, as to the manifested power of God, and says, Thou hast determined — tell me how. Every passion in the human breast is taken as a calculated force, not to be extinguished, but partly to be regulated, and partly to be provided for or against. And, when he has done all, he proceeds with fear and trembling, lest at any moment the forces which have escaped his calculation awake, and blow up his fabric.

Plato has to construct a republic. He looks at once to reason, and turns from phenomena to ideas. He asks, What is the ideal of perfection in a man? He assumes this to be the ideal of perfection in a state, and proceeds to develop it accordingly. The grand distinction between the two constructors becomes at the outset obvious. Bacon took the initiative from nature: Plato takes the initiative from reason, and endeavors to chain nature down on his procrustean bed: but the giant will not be bound. Nature

points to the family relation as coëval with history—the holy, personal, tender, beautiful tie between man and wife. Plato can distinctly show that it will be promotive of public felicity to disregard it. Nature says, I have appointed the family circle for the rearing of men: my way is to "turn the heart of the fathers unto the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers." Plato has abundant arguments to prove that a set of public nurses will manage the matter better. Nature says, I approve a distribution of labor, and have gifted men diversely. Plato says, I am happy to agree with you here—in this case, be my servant. In every instance, Plato judges; and the fact of his following nature, in certain cases, is no more proof that he submits to her dictation, than the fact that a man allows his horse to pursue the way homewards when he knows it, is proof that he would not turn his head if he found him going off the road. Nature, in a word, is Plato's bondmaid, not his queen.

This, we think, indicates both the extent and the source of Mr. Emerson's inaccuracy. The problem of problems, which has tried and baffled the intellect of man in all ages, is to unite the ideal of his soul with the determinations of nature. The Platonist, the utopian poet, the socialist dreamer, shapes his ideal such as it may be; scrimp, spare, and hungry-looking, like the angular ideals of certain dismal modern improvers, youthfully fresh and arrayed in the hues of morning, as that which was to convert the banks of the Susquehanna into a pantisocratic garden of Eden, or glittering in all the gorgeous beauty which Shelley hung around his pile in the "Revolt of Islam." He then brings it forth, begilded and bedizened, and proclaims, huskily or musically, that it is to stand forever. Nature arises, and sweeps it away, blowing it all into the air by the link of

some treacherous Guy Fawkes, or summarily wrecking it in blood. The Baconist reads nature, and is on the right way, but has as yet, we suspect, been reading but the half of man; for he must include the ideal in his scrutiny, or make a fatal omission. The man who can and will unite both, will renew the world: or, rather, let us plainly say, that no man will unite both, but that Almighty God, in the evolution of human history, will bring it about by what means — almost certainly, indeed, human — are most in accordance with his high will.

On the various subdivisions of Plato's political state we cannot enter. They corresponded to the capacities and feelings of the human being. Philosophers, answering to wisdom, ruled; the army, corresponding to courage and the irascible propensity in man, defended the state; craftsmen of various sorts, representing temperance, plied their various avocations for the benefit of all; justice pervaded all classes. The family relation was to be destroyed; all things were to be had in common.

Respecting the general tendency of Plato's philosophy, viewed morally, the testimony is uniform and unwavering. Speaking of his works, Sir James Macintosh remarks:— “The vein of thought which runs through them is always visible. The object is to inspire the love of truth, of wisdom, of beauty, especially of goodness, the highest beauty; and of that supreme and eternal mind, which contains all truth and wisdom, all beauty and goodness.” “When,” says Ritter, “we review all these doctrines of Plato, it is impossible to deny that they are pervaded with a grand and sublime view of life and the universe. This is the noble thought which inspires him to say, ‘God is the constant and immutable good; the world is good in a state of becoming, and the human soul that in and through which

the good of the world is to be consummated.' In this sublime conception we recognize the worthy disciple of Socrates; to illustrate it, was the object and design of his whole philosophy." "The secret," says Mr. Emerson, "of his popular success, is the moral aim which endeared him to mankind." And to the same effect are all testimonies. This it is, truly, which explains the earnest fascination with which all great souls in after generations looked back to Plato: here was one man who could deliberately prefer the unseen to the seen, who could snap asunder and cast aside from his giant arms the fetters of sense and of passion, and ascend, though alone, to the serene solitudes of truth. Hence it is that the hallowed light, streaming from his serene, passionless eye, has touched the heads of so many generations, and lies, like a pillar of tremulous radiance, along the stream of time: hence it is that, while his separate dogmas pass away, while the outward frame of his system, like a body once arrayed in beauty and buoyant with life, dies and moulders away, the spirit that dwelt within it, the celestial ardor that impelled him towards the holy, the beautiful, and the true, never dies.

To trace, in its grand lineaments, the influence of Plato on mankind, is a task which might occupy much space, but which may, we think, be disposed of, with considerable adequacy, in even a few paragraphs. That influence soon connected itself with Christianity, and has to be discussed in that relation. Were we to discuss at length the inviting and momentous questions, What is the relation of philosophy in general to Christianity? and What is the precise influence which Platonism has exerted in connection with the latter? we would manifestly be led into wide fields of discussion. But it is often remarkable into how small a compass the essentials of a great subject may be compressed;

and we trust that, avoiding the first question, we may give somewhat of a response to the second.

The whole course of ancient philosophical discussion, after the time of Plato, was, as we have said, directed by the tremendous force of his impression. From Greek philosophy arose Roman philosophy; it was a faint echo, but that echo was mainly of Platonism. Cicero was a great admirer of Plato.

But a new and altogether singular power now arose in the world. It was strangely allied and strangely opposed to Platonism and all philosophy. It was strangely allied: the conceptions which the gifted mind of Plato had but dimly formed were brought forth in complete development and unsullied radiance; whatever was true in his system, was re-proclaimed "with authority." It was strangely dis-severed from Platonism: its essential idea, its starting-point, its object, were different from those of philosophy. Men were not to *discover* God, and then worship, if so be that their reason approved the same; God was revealed, and men were to look—God commanded, and men were to obey. We shall borrow an illustration from the geological history of our globe. There was a stage, certain theorists have maintained, in the adaptation of our world to be the residence of man, when it was encompassed by a dense and humid atmosphere, suffused with a faint spectral radiance. Behind this mantle of luminous haze, the sun shone in his own beauty and strength, but no eye on our planet could see him. Now, suppose a physical philosopher to have awakened under the veiling mist, and to have commenced a series of observations regarding the origin of light. We can imagine him, after long gazing and careful reasoning, arriving at the conclusion that, since the light seemed stronger in one part of his sphere of vision than

elsewhere, and somewhat more gathered round a centre, there was probably one great luminary from which it radiated; we can imagine him settling dubiously the position of the sun, and arguing about its form; but doubt would still perplex him: until that glorious morning came when God said, "Let there be light," and the mist, opening its cloudy folds, and rolling swiftly away to east and west, the sun-rays triumphantly streaming along its wreathing gorges, revealed the whole lower world as the recipient of light and heat from one great source, one great sun. That physical philosopher seems to us to emblem well the position of mental philosophy, as represented by Plato, in relation to God. Dim streaks of a celestial fire, faint gleams of a celestial light, suffused, with feeble radiance, the atmosphere of earth: Plato, gazing long and considering earnestly, pronounced that they came from one God, but his tongue faltered, and, like Schlegel, he may be said to have died with the word "but" on his lips. Christianity revealed the union of goodness and God; the one the light of the universe, the other the eye from which it streamed. Such was the difference between philosophy and Christianity, the great essential difference; the one with piercing gaze looked from earth to heaven, the other descended from heaven to earth; the one endeavored to discover God; the other revealed him. There were many more. Christianity was in its essence more human than philosophy. The noble, and dauntless, and untiring Plato had climbed the heights of philosophy, to attain a region of serenity, but of coldness; he ascended the mountain to near the stars, but he reached the dwelling of eternal snow; his banner was inscribed "Excelsior," but the light was still at infinite distance above him, when he had to wind that banner around him and die. "Plato the man was almost completely absorbed in

Plato the dialectician;" a sublime melancholy shaded his brow. Christianity hallowed humanity, and gathered round itself, as in a queenly robe, every noble and home-like emotion of the heart. Christianity was in its means diverse from philosophy. From the midst of a downtrodden and depraved people, in a wild mountain-land, Christianity shone forth upon the world; poor mechanics were its missionaries. Hear the grand words of Milton, in speaking of God's way of acting in the case:—"It had been a small mastery for him to have drawn out his legions into array, and flanked them with his thunder; therefore he sent foolishness to confute wisdom, weakness to bind strength, despisedness to vanquish pride; and this is the great mystery of the gospel made good in Christ himself, who, as he testifies, came not to be ministered to, but to minister," etc. It was not the accumulation of the learning of the past and present, and some addition thereto by human originality: it was light from heaven, or it was nothing.

With this great and mysterious power philosophy came into collision, and the philosophy which so came was chiefly Platonism. For several centuries, the grand struggle continued. The combatants on the side of philosophy were the members of the famed Alexandrian school. The struggle took two forms—that of direct antagonism, and that of proposed amalgamation by one of the parties. We can trace neither process. Philosophy, in the hands of such men as Proclus and Porphyry, was directly opposed to Christianity; professing a wide and enlightened tolerance for other religions, and endeavoring, by exposition and eclecticism, to interpret their symbols in accordance with truth, these men turned a deaf ear to Christianity. Their hostile attempt was vain. Plotinus, on the other hand, and his followers, with the whole Gnostic school, and, we sup-

pose it must be added, certain of the Christian fathers, built up, or endeavored to build, a motley, though magnificent edifice on the twin foundations of philosophy and faith. They, too, failed. Philosophy at last sunk into silence, or withdrew into the cloister with the monk. There, century after century, Platonism continued to maintain a feeble existence, along with the more generally honored system of Aristotle. During the middle ages, took place the famous dispute between the realists and nominalists; the former asserting the real existence of general terms, the source of the Platonic ideas, and the other asserting general terms to be but marks of general classes, and mere abstractions. In the fifteenth century, about the time of the diffusion of Greek literature over Europe, on the occasion of the reduction of Constantinople by the Turks, the study of Plato revived under the patronage of the celebrated Cosmo de Medicis. The great mover in the matter was Gemistius Pletho, by whose suggestion Cosmo established a Platonic school at Florence. Marsilius Ficinus, son of Cosmo's physician, was educated, for the purpose of translating Plato into Latin, which he did, together with certain of the works of the later Platonists. Since the Reformation, the works of Plato have been known to all the learned, and his influence has been very deep: the "divine Plato" is a household word in literature.

All strictly speculative philosophy may be said to be Platonic. Plato might be called the eye of humanity looking towards the infinite. The questions which agitated him have never been solved, and perhaps never will be, yet we can nowise agree with the advocates of an exclusively positive science, that the attempts of philosophers to solve them have been merely a kind of sublime crotchetts: we

recognize the long struggle, as the grandest fact, except Christianity, in the history of man.

Even late German philosophy, with its swiftly-changing phantasmagoria of systems, is greatly respectable to us, as another embodiment, and it may be the last, of man's endeavors to scale the universe by himself. We cannot, however, look upon this philosophy, or any other, which dissects itself from Christianity, as so illustrious as was philosophy in Greece in the days of Plato. A moment's reflection upon the contrast between the mythology of Greece and the religion of Christ, will show our reason for so speaking. And, if we might venture one dubious glance into the future, we would institute a certain parallel between the stage at which modern philosophy has now arrived, and that at which ancient philosophy had arrived at the time of the Alexandrians. Ancient philosophy had striven to stand alone; when Christianity appeared, it made the two-fold attempt to oppose, and to buttress itself upon it: both attempts failed, and the evolution of modern civilization commenced. For several centuries, modern philosophy has struggled dubiously, and seems at length to have died amid the Morphean mists of Germany, or at least to have reached that stage at which all the questions have been asked, and none satisfactorily answered. Christianity still lives, and the union of Christianity and philosophy is the grandest problem at present before the human mind. With philosophy as opponent, Christianity will stand; an amalgamation is opposed essentially to the genius of both. Shall philosophy, entering the temple, become, with nobler auspices than in the middle ages, the handmaid of Christianity?

## VIII.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF CHRISTIAN CIVILIZATION.\*

A celebrated German author of the last century entitled one of his works *Christianity, or, Europe*. The words express his emphatic conviction of the inseparable connection between modern civilization and the Christian religion; and this conviction has been entertained by all the most profound thinkers who have directed their attention to the subject. Christianity has been recognized as the original spring, and pervading life of modern existence. Whether it has been looked upon with the eye of reason or of faith, whether it has been regarded as springing wholly from earth or as having come down from Heaven, no one has been able to contemplate modern history at all, without earnestly and deliberately contemplating *it*. In the eye of Gibbon, there was no answering gleam of faith or hope, as he looked towards that star which rose in the East, and ascended, in tranquil majesty, over the wild sea, strewed with the wrecks of empire, in which went down the sun of Rome. Yet even he could not pass Christianity by, as an ordinary phenomenon. Were it only as a philosophic wonder, he could not but pause to consider that “pure and humble religion” which “gently insinuated itself into

\* A lecture delivered in Manchester and Liverpool, England, Oct. 1856.

the minds of men, grew up in silence and obscurity, derived new vigor from opposition, and finally erected the triumphant banner of the Cross on the ruins of the Capitol;" and which, "after a revolution of thirteen or fourteen centuries," was "still preferred by the nations of Europe, the most distinguished portion of human kind in arts and learning, as well as in arms." Goethe, a far profounder man than Gibbon, and fitly representing a loftier form of that rationalism, of which, in its French manifestation, no better representative could be found than Gibbon, has spoken of Christianity with deep reverence, as the greatest moral fact of human history, as a point of attainment from which the race cannot recede, consequently as an influence which cannot die. Baron Humboldt finds Christianity remoulding men's conception of the physical universe, and breathing the influence of a deeper and softer humanity over nations. M. Guizot points to the Church as "the great connecting link — the principle of civilization — between the Roman and the barbarian world." Lord Lindsay and Mr. Ruskin tell us that Christianity is at the heart of all that is truest and best, most nobly human and most purely spiritual, in modern art. If we turn to writers who have more expressly considered the relation of Christianity to human history, we find the attestation still more explicit, the unanimity still more complete. Frederick von Schlegel, the very able author of *The Philosophy of History*, discovers in Christianity "the new words of a new life, and new light and moral and divine science, that was to unfold new views of the world, introduce a new organization of society, and give a new form to human existence." Neander, a more powerful and healthful thinker than Schlegel, agreed with him here, and devoted his life to exhibit the progress already made by the spirit of Christianity, in

pervading and fashioning the life of mankind. "The great Founder of Christianity," says Philip Schaff, one of the most recent, but, it may prove, one of the greatest of Church historians, "The great Founder of Christianity is the vital principle and the guide, the centre and turning-point, and at the same time the key, of all history. . . . In ancient history, what is most remarkable and significant is the preparation for Christianity by the divine revelation in Israel, and by the longing of the benighted heathen. As to late history, Christianity is the very pulse of its life, its heart's blood, its central stream."

But I must pause. To do more than indicate the abundance of testimony on this point is forbidden by the comprehensiveness of my subject and the proportionate shortness of my time. I shall consider it beyond dispute that Christianity has been the vital spirit of the modern time, and it will be our endeavor, this evening, to attain some definite and distinct apprehension of those principles which it introduced into civilization, and of their mode of manifestation in the several epochs of European history. The task is one of difficulty, and only with extreme inaccuracy can it be now performed; but its performance with even partial success will amply reward effort. No subject of contemplation could be more august than that of the celestial influence of Christianity, searching the depths of the human spirit, and evolving its powers in the broadest, the most varied, the most profoundly moral and spiritual, of civilizations. No intellectual exercise could be more invigorating or profitable, than that of penetrating the essence, or embracing the grand manifestations, of that influence. The point we desire to reach is high; but it is not necessary that our prospect be indefinite. Apt as we British are to boast of our practical talent, and our power to appreci-

ate individual facts, there are other nations which might, perhaps, read us a lesson in the art of taking broad views, of reducing the multiplicity of phenomena to the unity of principle, of marshalling facts by law. A traveller, if such may be imagined, passing along the ridge of the Andes, would come upon the sources of the great South American rivers, Orinoco, La Plata, Amazon. As he saw the fountain, bubbling from the hill-side, or trickling down the ice-crag, and as he marked its silver thread winding away on the boundless plain, would no more be revealed to him than the few drops by his side or the thin streak below? Would not his mind's eye, reaching far beyond his physical vision, behold the stately river, rolling on, in the pomp of its gathered waters, hollowing out valleys for the abode of nations, with forests and savannahs green around it, and cities resting on its banks? Would he not read the geography of a continent in the trickling fountain and the slender thread?

Thus it is that certain facts do not end in themselves. They are suggestive or representative of a thousand others. And of such representative facts are we in quest this evening. Nay more. An illustration is, indeed, but an illustration, and we shall seek not only to discover the fountains, but also, more or less, to trace the streams, of Christian influence in modern times; but with this premised, we may find the position of our supposed traveller closely similar to that we are to occupy. The centuries which witnessed the spread of Christianity, we found ourselves entitled to regard as the moral, intellectual, social, and political watershed, bounding the whole continent of modern life. Those streams of influence then commenced their course, which have ever since continued to flow. At times, they may have been slow and turbid; at times, their windings may have been so circuitous that the attainment of the

goal seemed impossible ; at times, they may have rushed on in wild haste and tumult, as of the torrent and cataract ; at times they may have disappeared altogether, like rivers running under ground. Yet to them, the grand conformations of national life were always owing ; from the most circuitous winding, there was always a return ; and even though they should in some quarters seem to be lost, and in some others to be turbid or obstructed, the experience of the past combines with faith in Divine Providence to assure us, that they will ultimately work themselves clear, draw towards them new tributaries, and irrigate with their healing waters all the provinces of human life.

It will promote perspicuity to keep distinctly in mind that I begin by offering a succinct view of the new influences or principles originally introduced by Christianity into civilization ; and shall then proceed to trace their action in the various epochs of European history.

Christianity, then, first of all, introduced a new *moral* influence, of mighty power, or rather, a series of new moral influences, into civilization.

It is not a very safe exercise to exhibit, even on a broad and general scale, how much better we are than other men ; and I most cordially sympathize with that broad and generous philosophy, which scorns to add a glory to truth and righteousness by darkening, beyond what is necessary, error and vice. Christianity need not shrink from acknowledging that God did not leave himself without witness among the heathen nations. "Beneath the ashes of Pagan superstition," says Schaff, "there glowed a feeble spark of faith in the unknown God." "The nations," said Edward Irving, and his words have of late been substantially and unanswerably confirmed by Archbishop Whately, "The nations are but the apostacy of the Patriarchal religion, as the

ten tribes were of the Jewish, and the Papacy is of the Christian." Many of the Greek philosophers, with their Roman followers, sincerely pursued truth, and propounded elevated and inspiring doctrines. The death of Socrates has been for two thousand years a lesson of magnanimity and of placid courage, and an attestation of the fact that, if conscience and reason are honestly listened to, they may, in the individual case, give such assurance of the immortality of the soul, as will render a man calm and satisfied in death. If, lastly, it is noble to rise superior to the pleasures of sense, and to gird up the mind to pursue the wise, the beautiful, and the true, then may we still learn something from Plato's majestic control of passion and passionate devotion to truth.

But such men as Neander, Schaff, Whately, to mention no others, have now put it beyond all reasonable doubt that, the moral system of the Pagan world was sapped in its very foundations, and full of irreparable flaws from top to bottom. Philosophy, indeed, pierced at intervals into the region of pure moral truth; but in no case was the ethical system of any philosopher entirely correct; principles destructive of the very essence of virtue were maintained in not a few of the schools; and, most important of all, the multitude was scorned by all the philosophers. The teaching was not perfect for those who enjoyed it, and the mass of mankind could not enjoy it at all. The philosophy of Socrates, indeed, seems to have been intended for the household and the market place; but if from Plato it derived the advantage of mature elaboration and scientific form, it was forever raised by him beyond the sphere of common life. The accepted fashion with philosophers was to approve the superstitions of the vulgar as received by them; to regard the popular mythologies as mechanical appliances for the

preservation of order; and to be serenely indifferent whether men in general believed their own doctrines or not. The reasonings of philosophy were to practical morality as a theory of rain is to the fructifying shower. When we turn to the mythologies themselves, matters are still worse. They were pervaded by that profoundly manichean character, which, I venture to assert, must attach to all religions framed by the unaided human mind—framed negatively, I mean, by the gradual loss of truth anciently revealed, and substitution of human falsehood—and unpurified by the direct inspiration of the Almighty. The torch of natural conscience, blown upon by the tempest of passion and the strong side winds of error, will always toss flickering from side to side, unless steadied by the hand of God. So it was in Greece and Rome. The good and the bad were alike impersonated in divinities, and alike worshipped. Precepts of virtue alternated with examples of vice. The well-disposed Greek might strive after wisdom, self-restraint, gentle fortitude, and valor, on the model of Minerva; but why should he not also cultivate brutal ferocity with Mars, whose soul, as has been said, was in the butcher's knife? The sovereign of Olympus, venerable Jove himself, furnished him with a history, not unworthy,—perhaps I should say not worthy,—of the Newgate calendar. One mock divinity would back him when he stole, another when he was unchaste, another when he lied. Of the immortality of the soul, he could not be assured. Death was to him a thought of utter woe. The happiest among the dead were not so happy as the living, and the many were miserable. All that related to a future, or a spiritual existence, was to him a faint forecast, a vaguely hinted mystery, a wavering haze, a mere dream. The two ghastly negations of essential manicheism pressed upon his life: he

could not be assured that the good is infinitely better than the bad; and he could not be assured that happiness in this universe is, on the whole, triumphant over misery.

Great, in all respects, was the change wrought by Christianity. It did no dishonor to the efforts of reason to scale the precipices of truth and virtue: but for the first time, it let down from Heaven the ladder of faith, on which the way-faring man could ascend to meet the angels and to know his God. It thus assumed a radically different position from that of philosophy. On the other hand, all the impersonated vagaries of heathen mythology were taken up and annihilated in the one God of revelation. The effect on the moral and intellectual state, the influence in bracing up the whole nature and unifying the conception of the moral and physical universe, of the simple belief in one God, instead of many, it is perhaps impossible to exaggerate. Manicheism, in its very essence, was now as good as extinguished. It might re-appear in flickering gleams, but it could never more reach the heart or brain of Christian nations. "God is light;" these words proclaimed the eternal and infinite superiority of holiness to wickedness: "God is love;" these words proclaimed the essential triumph of happiness over misery. This was indeed a Gospel to mankind. There is something very melancholy in that essential manicheism of unrevealed religions. It seems to me the deepest wail,—the most lorn and dreary cry,—that has proceeded from the sad heart of humanity. There was good in the world, indeed, the early and the latter rain, the smiling, opulent summer, the palm trees and fountains, the broad harvest fields, the warm home-affections. There must be a divine Giver of all this; so the rejoicing heart believed in Orumzd, the preserver; in Apollo, the God of light and music; in the benignant strength of Thor. But

was joy the prevailing thing in the world? Did not long drought burn up the corn, and turn the bounty of summer into famine and pestilence? Did not the weary traveller, after long journeying, sustained by hope, over the desert sand, find often, as he came to the remembered well, that its waters were dried up, and he had only to lie down and die? Did not treachery, falsehood, cruelty, intrude even into the domestic circle, and might not mortal hatred lurk behind the smile of friendship? These questions could not be put aside. They were answered by the rising in the soul of a great agony and a mighty fear. Some power, stupendous as that of the beneficent Deity, must have it as its special attribute to torment and destroy mankind. So Ahriman, the god of darkness and destruction, rose up in eternal defiance against Ormuzd, the preserver; the arrows of Apollo shot blight and plague, as well as summer warmth; and Thor and the good divinities had to wage endless and internecine war with the giant demons of the northern mythology. So it always was. Man escaped from the sorrow of the world, only by casting the shadow of it over the whole face of Heaven, to spread over him one infinite vault of starless night. He could not dare to set Ormuzd above Ahriman; nay, might it not be that the beneficent Ormuzd would not be swift to punish; and was it not better, more wise, more prudent, if one must choose, to attend chiefly to the worship of Ahriman, to propitiate the destroyer? So the simple, sorrowful heart sank down literally to the worship of devils. But Christianity gave at last the sublime assurance to man, that love, that light, that beneficence, hold eternal sway in this universe; that in hating and defying evil and all its supporters in earth and hell there is safety, victory, peace; that God, the Creator and Preserver, has smitten the devil and his angels into eternal confusion

by the mere breath of his indignation. Christianity showed the shadow of human sin falling over the face of Heaven; but there it did not settle in the blackness of despair; it brought out the ever-burning celestial lights of divine mercy and redeeming love. And no night can blacken those stars!

All those truths of spiritual order, at which Paganism vaguely guessed, were now put beyond doubt. The immortality of the soul was distinctly affirmed. The spiritual nature of man and his present and future spiritual existence were opened up. Time was made to rest on eternity.

Virtues which contradicted the whole genius of ancient life and morals, but which, once propounded, awakened a response in man's deepest nature, were proclaimed by Christianity. Gentleness, mercy, humility,—all those virtues which are antithetically opposed to the central virtue of the old world, pride, were preached to the nations in the words of the Saviour. Self-negation came in the place of self-assertion; trust came for determination; revenge passed into forgiveness; hate became love; war became peace. To subdue another and reign over him was no longer the sublimest conception, the loftiest ideal, of men and nations. Archbishop Whately rightly recognizes it as a grand distinguishing characteristic of Christianity, that it sent men to learn of little children.

And all this ethical perfection was, I must repeat, no possession of a select few, attained by the method of reason; it was a free gift from God, bestowed in His Son upon all men, and to be received by faith. "Antiquity," says Neander, "was destitute of any independent means, adapted alike to all stages of human enlightenment, for satisfying man's religious needs." This all-sufficing and all-suiting means was now found; faith did for the multitude what

reasoning could never do ; and the magnitude of the result in relation to the moral life of mankind cannot possibly be over-estimated. The exception became the rule. The change was as that from the wintry scene, with, indeed, here and there an icicle fallen, here and there the snow melted from a spire or house-top, here and there sun-beams clustering about the mountain side, but the general scene all wrapt in snow, and the landscape of summer, where the light rests conspicuously on no single points, and that just because it floods the whole prospect.

Another change, of a practical nature, bearing relation to the ethical teaching of the world, was introduced by Christianity, too important to be overlooked, even in this brief summary. That mature scholar and profound, if somewhat desultory thinker, Thomas De Quincey, has brought prominently into notice the fact that Paganism had nothing, or next to nothing, to show corresponding to the moral and doctrinal instructions of a Christian ministry. Archbishop Whately, too, in his work on the peculiarities of the Christian religion, has not failed to specify that it alone, of all religions, has no priesthood, no specially privileged class, who can lift moral responsibility from the shoulders of their fellow men, or mechanically open for them the gates of Heaven. The circumstances commented on by these acute writers, though not identical, are closely allied. The fact that no priest comes between the Christian and his God leaves in its untrammelled might the instinct of moral responsibility: the fact that the Christian revelation is one of comprehensive and practical morals, and that the Christian ministry possesses no mystic power apart from its special capacity to bring the Christian system of morals to bear on the minds of men, secures an institution whose express function is, with all therein implied of intellectual and

moral influence, the ethical and spiritual instruction of mankind. The priesthoods of Greece and Rome were the performers of a certain set of external rites and ceremonies. They superintended sacrifices; they read auguries; they swept temples; they dusted images; they laid out banquets; they arrayed processions. In the mysteries, they might impart one or two moral truths to an initiated few; but it has never been proved that the teaching of the mysteries was pure, and it reached only to the select coterie. To the people, the priests gave no good instructions, no salutary counsels. The alteration effected by Christianity was decisive and all-important. The perfect type of a Christian ministry has not, indeed, been preserved in its purity in all ages and Churches. The reverse has more corresponded with fact. Yet it is not easy to present fully to our minds the difference between even a Mediæval priesthood, with what of Christianity they taught, and any priesthood of antiquity. Even a degraded Christian clergy, like that of the Middle Ages, could not but keep before the public mind certain of those grand truths and ideas, by which, so to speak, the moral position of mankind is defined,—the unity of the Godhead, the immortality of the soul, the essential sin of selfishness, the infinite evil and danger of wickedness, the essential joy and eternal bliss of holiness. When our Lord commanded his disciples to “Go and *teach* all nations,” He spoke words fitted to change the moral aspect of the world.

I have been compelled to take merely a single glance, comprehensive as might be, at the new moral principles and influences introduced by Christianity. I must hasten on. But let it be distinctly and forcibly conceived that the religion of Jesus substituted the triune God of the New Testament for the pantheon of mythology; that it gave assurance to nations, not merely to coteries, of the existence and im-

mortality of the soul and of eternal rewards and punishments; that it re-adjusted the whole ethical system, by making humility, and not pride, its central point; that it annihilated Manicheism by showing the arm of the Almighty severing the light from the darkness, exalting the one to Heaven, and thrusting the other down to hell; and that it substituted, for the priesthood of Paganism, the morally and intellectually educational institution of the Christian ministry.

In even the most cursory glance, however, at the new moral influences introduced into the world by Christianity, it cannot be permitted us to pass by what must be defined as the distinctive fact of the Christian revelation,—that which embraces in itself all its peculiarities, and belongs to it alone; the fact, namely, that it brought within the sphere of general human vision the Christ of history, the Jesus of the gospels. I would desire you at present to regard this as a simply historical fact, omitting its theological aspects. Consider the Saviour merely as the Christian type of human perfection; as the ideal of virtue and excellence; as the exemplar to whom Christians were to look, in every striving after the better, the higher, the holier. Think how Jesus is portrayed in the gospel narratives. There is, in the drawing of the likeness, a certain rustic simplicity, a certain homeliness as of those peasants who drew it, a sterling heartiness reaching the broadest and deepest human sympathy, of which, perhaps, no better idea could be formed than by comparing it with the style of Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, which so closely copied it: yet the lines are of immortal light, imperishable as the light of God's Throne; and as we gaze and gaze upon them, we see that they image forth infinite and unchangeable perfection. So unanimous has been the voice of mankind in setting Jesus at the

head of all impersonations of human excellence, that a different view does really not deserve notice. A very able Socinian writer of the present day, while refusing to recognize Jesus as divine, is yet constrained to acknowledge Him an exception to humanity. "He stands," says that writer, "so high, that the purest and noblest elements of our humanity must experience an immense development, and all its coarser adhesions be well purged out, before it can enter generally into any vital communion with Him." Consider then, the fact that this ideal man, with whom, considered merely as a type of human virtue, we are after eighteen hundred years still unable to commune, was first given to the world as an historical fact, first set before the eyes of men, by Christianity; consider that, however men might wander from Him, or, turning to his mother or his brother, put Him from them, His divine endurance, His infinite self-sacrifice, His faithfulness unto death, the unsullied whiteness of that fame on which pharisaic hate and priestly craft could leave not one stain, would always beam out again and again upon the world; consider that He was ever there, drawing men with that eye, in which celestial holiness shone through human tears, drawing them, in the long lapse of ages, nearer and nearer Him, never able altogether to lose sight of Him; consider that, wherever there appeared a new energy to pierce to truth, a new nobleness to aspire after holiness, a new love to consecrate itself for God and man, there was in Jesus an encouragement, an example, a hope to cheer, a guidance to direct: consider, I say, all this and then you may faintly realize, what words are utterly powerless to express, the transforming and irresistible change in the moral position of man, brought about by the mere fact that Jesus lived and died.

The new moral elements introduced by Christianity con-

stitute one great class. Another great class I shall define as that of the *social* elements introduced by the same means. And in the term "social," I must comprehend all that relates, not merely to the domestic, but to the political, commercial, literary, and artistic provinces of life. The modifying and quickening elements introduced into all the social relations and activities, I shall attempt to embrace in one succinct view like the preceding.

Perhaps the most correct method to be pursued here is to name one principle, which concentrated in itself an unbounded energy of social change, and whose various applications effected revolution in special departments. This principle I find in the twofold idea of the unity of the race, implying essential equality in capability, in merit, in immortality, and the essential nobleness of all natural and honest work.

The majesty of man, not as the king, not as the warrior, not as the scholar, not as the millionaire, but simply as the man, was first explicitly declared by Christianity: and the essential equality in honor and dignity, of all endeavor, so it is natural in itself, and pursued with no selfish aim, was also first proclaimed to the mass of mankind in the Gospel. The essential unity of the race was exhibited in that the Saviour took the common nature upon Himself; and in the express intimation, that all nations of the earth are of one blood. The essential nobleness of labor was announced, in the command to do with might whatsoever the hand findeth to do; and in the declaration that Christianity makes not a few things, not a select number of the human faculties, but *all* things new. A few words will suffice to exhibit the pervasive and inevitable energy of this two-fold social truth; a truth unknown to heathenism.

It is of the highest importance, it is indispensable, I be-

lieve, to a right appreciation of what Christianity has done for the world, and an intelligence, in any measure correct, of the great divisions of human history, that we fairly conceive and master the great fact, which has been so powerfully exposed and illustrated by Neander, and which is one of those great leading ideas that give character to his invaluable work on Church History, of what he styles the aristocratism of ancient civilization. This aristocratism has already met us in the strictly sectional teaching, both of ancient philosophy and of the ancient mysteries. That was its moral aspect. But its social aspect was equally remarkable. The civilization of antiquity was the civilization of a few freemen and a multitude of slaves. Freedom was synonymous with the privilege of a caste. It was not conceived as a common right which all held directly from God; in theory it was, perhaps, not defined at all; it was merely a peculiar possession, which a certain number of men carved out with their own swords, and thenceforward defended. This one undeniable fact sets ancient freedom and modern in antithetic opposition to each other. The one was essentially selfish: the other is not selfish. Freedom, as well as immortality, was brought to light, when the majesty of man was vindicated in the person of the man Christ Jesus.

But, again, this inability to conceive equality of social rights was aggravated in its evil effects by what was its own inevitable consequence — the proscription, more or less complete, of various modes in which human faculty is exerted. This brings us face to face with one of the deepest characteristics of ancient civilization. It was essentially martial; and it was, in a sense, essentially idle. The warrior was its hero. "The Roman state," says Schlegel, from its origin, and according to its first constitution, was nothing else than a well-organized school of war, a perma-

nent establishment for conquest." The Greeks were not so exclusively warlike, but with them too the separation of society into working and unworking castes was distinct. There was associated with idleness in itself a certain idea of nobleness, at least as contrasted with any kind of work of a physical nature. The gentleman was he who had no express occupation, who might fight, or hunt, or legislate, or discuss philosophic subtleties, or admire works of art; but who superintended no manufacture and engaged in no trade. Commerce, it is well known, was in the principal civilized nations of antiquity in the hands of slaves. The freeman, even though a plebeian, would not work. The circumstance was enough to vitiate the whole system of ancient civilization. It bore its most pernicious fruits in that of Rome. The free rabble of Rome, the pauper conquerors of the world, who scorned the slavish arts of trade and handicraft, and had two wants, bread and gladiatorial shows, presented one of the most pitiable spectacles the world has yet seen. Certain modern authors of great name have found the cause of Roman decay in the removal of the old agricultural population of Italy, and have adduced, from the appearance presented by the urban rabble of Rome, an argument applicable to all states of civilization, as to the essentially inferior and unwarlike character of a town population. But these writers seem to me to omit the all-important consideration, that the freemen of Rome were idlers, while the populations of our cities are workers. The invigorating, ennobling influence of labor is present in the one case, and was absent in the other. Mr. McCulloch, and I doubt not many others, have shown that the modern mechanic is as intelligent, as brave, and it may even be, physically as strong, as the agricultural laborer. It is a scientific blunder, as well as a piece of insulting injustice, to

compare the workmen of such cities as Manchester, Liverpool, and Glasgow, with the imperial paupers, who were fed from the harvests of Egypt, and shouted over the writhings of gladiators. But labor never became dignified until it was touched by the golden sceptre of Christianity.

Time forbids me to follow the action of this great two-fold principle into all the departments of social and national existence; but it is not difficult to trace its general influence. How would it act in politics? There can be no question whatever. However gradually it might proceed, however wisely it might modify by circumstances its complete manifestation, the end at which it would aim cannot be mistaken. Christianity could not call forth, as if from the cave in which for centuries they had lain dead, the energies and activities of the soul of man, and yet leave his political activity, his power of recognizing himself as the member of a national body, and acting freely in that capacity, still to slumber. Self-government is, beyond question, competent to man; and I know not how any Christian can either relieve himself from the duty of conscientiously seeking for it, or unconditionally deny it to his fellow-men. What would be its effect in relation to the physical world? It would send men to the field, to the mine, to the workshop, with an energy and a sense of dignity never experienced before; it would develop the physical resources of the planet to their last jot and tittle; it would make fire bear man's burdens, and the lightning speak his words; it would lend grandeur to the smoke of the engine and music to the roar of machinery; it would link nation to nation in commercial brotherhood. One glance along the history of the three last centuries answers the question, whether it *has* done these things. What would be its effect in Literature, in Science, in Art? In every case, it would unfold

the whole nature, exercise the whole capacities, of man; it would ennoble human life and hallow the household affections; it would broaden, deepen, humanize.

It was implied in the change in all man's social ideas which we have been contemplating, but it deserves separate notice, that a different place in the social scale than that she occupied under paganism, should be assigned to woman. In Athens, the focus of ancient civilization, women were little better than slaves. In Rome, they obtained rather more consideration, but they were still, in many respects, deprived of their natural station. Christianity brought emancipation to woman, and with it an inexhaustible store of elevating and softening influences to civilization. It is true, that the change which has in this respect taken place in modern Europe was not exclusively, or at once, owing to Christianity. The barbarians who overthrew the Roman empire, however inferior they might be in other respects, were more perfect gentlemen than their southern antagonists in the important regard of respect and estimation for women. It may be true, also, that the form in which the homage of chivalry to the gentler sex finally passed into manifestation was through the worship of Mary. And it may be true, as represented by Mr. Hallam, that the domestic arrangements of the feudal system favored the development of respect and affection towards the wife and the mother. But all this might have failed of its result if Christianity had not previously prepared the soil. And at all events, the fact remains unassailable, that Christianity does proclaim the equal dignity of woman; and that richer, purer, gentler elements have thus entered into Christian civilization than ever entered into any other. Woman was the Creator's crown-

ing gift to Adam; and Christianity restored the godlike boon to the world.

I have now endeavored to sketch, in hasty outline, the principles introduced into civilization by Christianity. It remains to trace their manifestations in the periods of modern civilization. But it must carefully be noted that our summary has been gathered mainly from a consideration of Christianity as revealed in Scripture, aided by hints from the history of modern times, and that it might be impossible to exhibit all the influences we have discovered, in distinct manifestation, at any one period. The mode in which this manifestation took place and may be exhibited affords, indeed, an emphatic testimony to the celestial origin and perfect excellence of Christianity. Taking any one age in modern history, it might prove a vain attempt to show that the essentially Christian principles which we have seen were dominant in it. But look to the New Testament, and you have these principles *there*: contemplate the modern epochs at which the nations of Europe have most certainly made an advance, and you find them, with new power and breadth, asserting themselves *then*. Their development was the advancement of the race; and every onward movement of the race brought out more clearly their original essence. The lights of history and of revelation thus meet. The divine origin of Christianity is vindicated by the fact that the human race can add nothing to it, and only in the lapse of long ages can learn to drink of its living water. When, also, the argument is thus contemplated, the essential nature of Christian civilization is satisfactorily established; the character of its various periods is rightly ascertained; and the true point of view is reached from which to discover whether, at any given time, Christian civilization is more or less fully developed, and

what are the circumstances and influences which imperil its character or hinder its extension.

The history of Europe since the commencement of the Christian era has been variously divided by various historians. It might be exceedingly profitable to consider certain of those modes of division, did our space permit. To do so is impossible. I shall, however, quote the division of Church history, strictly so called, proposed by Philip Schaff, in the general introduction to his great work. It is true that the scope of his division is somewhat too contracted for our entire purpose. But the Christian Church is the central subject of our observations, and therefore it is well to have a distinct view of the various stages of its history.

Schaff, then, divides the history of the Christian Church into three ages, each age containing three periods.

#### “FIRST AGE.

The ancient, or the Græco-Latin (Eastern and Western) Universal Church, from its foundation on the day of Pentecost to Gregory the Great (A. D. 30–590); thus embracing the first six centuries.

*First Period.*—The *Apostolic Church*, from the first Christian Pentecost to the death of the Apostles (A. D. 30–100).

*Second Period.*—The *Persecuted Church* (*ecclesia pressa*), to the reign of Constantine (311).

*Third Period.*—The *established Church* of the *Græco-Roman empire*, and amidst the barbarian storms, to Gregory the Great (590).

#### SECOND AGE.

The Mediæval Church, or the Romano-Germanic Catholicism, from Gregory the Great to the Reformation (A. D. 590–1517).

*Fourth Period.*—The commencement of the Middle Ages, the planting of the Church among the Germanic nations, to the time of Hildebrand (590–1049).

*Fifth Period.*—The flourishing period of the Middle Ages, the summit of the Papacy, monachism, scholastic and mystic theology, to Boniface VIII. (1049–1303).

*Sixth Period.*—The dissolution of the Middle Ages, and preparation for the Reformation (1303–1517).

### THIRD AGE.

The Modern, or Evangelical Protestant Church, in conflict with the *Roman Catholic* Church, from the Reformation to the present time.

*Seventh Period.*—The *Reformation*, or *productive Protestantism* and re-acting *Romanism* (sixteenth century).

*Eighth Period.*—*Orthodox-confessional* and *scholastic Protestantism*, in conflict with *ultramontane Jesuitism*, and this again with *semi-protestant Jansenism* (seventeenth century and first part of the eighteenth).

*Ninth Period.*—*Subjective and Negative Protestantism* (*Rationalism* and *Sectarianism*), and positive preparation for a new age in both Churches (from the middle of the eighteenth century to the present time)."

This division is comprehensive and useful. Perhaps the way in which the ninth and last period is regarded, is the most open to objection. However the phenomenon of rationalism may be estimated in itself, to give it the name of Protestantism, whether qualified by the adjective "subjective," amounting here simply to individual or personal, or no, is, as I shall afterwards have further occasion to observe, to do profound injustice to the Reformers, and to mistake the true character of the Reformation. The great protest of the sixteenth century was against the *corruption* of a

*religion*; it was the cry of nations to have original Christianity purified from human adhesions: but no process of purification can go the length of purifying away the essence and substance of what is purged; and religion itself is washed away, Christianity itself is annihilated, when reason is exalted above faith. No amount of liberalism, therefore, ought to induce us to consider rationalism a development of Protestantism; and the only true way of regarding it is as a foreign influence, subordinate, possibly, to the further elimination of religious truth, but occupying an essentially different position from that of a religion.

With this qualification—and let me say that it is one which the general tenor of Schaff's work leads me to think he would himself substantially admit—we shall accept his general division, and direct our attention, during the remaining portion of our time, to the leading characteristics of those three ages which he defines. I may remark that, however these ages may be divided into minor portions, there can be no doubt whatever as to themselves. Early Christianity, Latin Christianity, and Modern Christianity, or that since the Reformation, are so evidently the grand natural divisions of the Christian era, that mistake or difference of opinion cannot exist.

In the first age, that of early struggling Christianity, the new principles in the Gospel did not fail to exhibit their power and benignity. I think it admits of satisfactory proof, that the scheme of Christian doctrine in its whole theologic breadth, in its connection with all the provinces of human knowledge and philosophy, was not so fully conceived by the primitive Christians as it has since been. The intellectual worth and meaning of Christianity was not systematically unfolded before the Reformation. But in pure spirituality of devotion, in fervency of personal

piety, the early age stands alone. The light was dewy and beautiful in that new dawn of humanity. Those were the days when Christians walked so closely with God, that light from Heaven beamed visibly around them. Those were the days when men said of Christians, "See how they love one another!" Those were the days when, Gibbon himself being witness, the form of Christian morality rose amid heathen grossness, so pure, so saintly, that the Pagans themselves were astonished and abashed, driven into fiendish hatred, or won to penitence and adoration. The voice of Christianity was heard against the licentiousness that reigned in the temples of Venus; and its eye fell in heavenly pity on the agony of the gladiator. A softer gentleness threw its smile over the faces of men; and, strange as it might seem, yet in beautiful natural consistency, a new manliness, a robust valor, recalling better times, also appeared. "In an age of enervated refinement," says Neander, "and of servile cowardice, the Christians manifested an enthusiasm which gave fresh energy to life, and an heroic faith which despised tortures and death rather than do what was contrary to conscience. This heroism of the Christians did indeed strike many as a phenomenon foreign to the age; they made it a matter of reproach to them that they possessed a character well enough befitting the ruder days of antiquity, but little suited to their own refined and gentle times." It was then that the hardihood of the Christian faith was proved by its ability to root itself in blood. The sword which had smitten all the nations into submission to Rome was unsheathed against the Galileans, and unsheathed in vain. So intensely and perpetually did those early Christians realize the belief that the seen and temporal is but a wavering film over the unseen and eternal, that they hastened even too willingly and joyously to

martyrdom. The mysterious spectacle was presented of a humility and self-negation unexampled in the world, and a fortitude which, from female eyes, could smile calm defiance into the face of death.

That power of Christianity to vindicate the essential majesty of man, to give the same celestial gifts to the babe as to the philosopher, which we found characteristic of Christian principle in the abstract, was now exhibited in practice. "Men," says Neander again, "in the lowest class of society, who had hitherto known nothing of religion but its ceremonies and its fables, attained to clear and firm religious convictions. . . . "Every Christian mechanic," says Tertullian, "has found God, and shows him to you; and can teach you all in fact that you require to know of God; even though Plato (*in the Timæus*) says that it is hard to find out the Creator of the universe, and impossible, after one has found Him, to make Him known to all."

It is remarkable and undeniable that, from the time of the introduction of Christianity into the world, it was the one principle of vitality and growth amid decay. We have seen how it renewed the character, amid the effeminacy of a decaying civilization. Philosophy and literature speedily acknowledged its power. The philosophic thought of the first centuries was all modified by it. Philosophy attempted to make good its position against it: but that was a vain attempt. Then it assayed to unite with Christianity, but in that, too, it failed. Christianity, it can never be too strongly enforced, is incapable of ever becoming strictly a philosophy. The essential characteristic of philosophy, I shall agree with Mr. Ferrier, though totally disagreeing with him on every other point, is that its method is reasoning. Until the conditions of humanity are changed, this confines it to a class. But religion comes to the mass of

men; Christianity speaks to nations; and its method is, therefore, faith. Gnosticism and Neo-Platonism were radically, as the great thinker to whom I have already so often referred suggests, attempts of the ancient spirit of aristocracy in knowledge to introduce itself into Christianity. The endeavor was unsuccessful: but successful or no, the truth remains, that the active philosophic thinking of the time derived its vitality from the position in which it stood with regard to Christianity. Add to this that in Patristic literature, whatever may be its excellences or defects, Christianity produced a series of works of a very remarkable order, of which it may at least be confidently affirmed, that they rose as far above any mythological literature of antiquity, as, in philosophic accuracy and theological breadth, they may have been, in modern times, surpassed.

This hasty glance at the first age of Christian civilization must suffice. That age extended, as we saw, to the end of the sixth century, at which period the victory over Paganism was complete, and the preparation made for Latin or Mediaeval Christianity.

In proceeding to consider, in the same brief manner, the civilization of the Middle Ages, it must be distinctly specified that a decline had taken place from the purity of Apostolic times. A vail had gradually been woven, becoming more dense from year to year, over those pure and perfect principles which were embodied in the New Testament. Mankind was not able to look upon the pure radiance of the Gospel; men desired to have that radiance softened and dimmed for their feeble vision; and as of old, the sinful feebleness was permitted to work its own will. A vail passed over the face of Christ as over the face of Moses. Or, to take another illustration from the ancient dispensation, men were not content with the invisible reign of the

Saviour: they desired a king, a Saul; and they had their wish.

Not to tire you with authorities, and to compress the matter into a narrow compass, the principal respects in which the Church at the commencement of the seventh century had departed from the purity of earlier times, may be briefly summed as follows:—1st, In the obscuration of the strictly spiritual nature of Christianity, by a greater or less addition of elements Pagan in their character, specially by a multiplication of forms and ceremonies: 2d, In the circumstance, essentially unchristian in its tendency, of the formation of a sacerdotal caste, in opposition to the idea of a Christian priesthood: 3d, In an abrogation of the original brotherhood and equality of the Christian Church, and a strongly developed tendency to render it, in its constitution, less and less popular, and more and more aristocratic and monarchical.

It is very difficult to present anything approaching to a correct view of such a subject as mediæval civilization, in such space as is now at our command. A thousand years will not compress into a few minutes. But happily we are not without highly competent assistants in making this attempt. Milman, Neander, Schaff, Guizot, and others afford us generalized views of the period which testify their correctness by their radical agreement. The characteristic of the Church Christianity was a vast uniformity: the characteristic of general civilization was an explicit submission to this uniformity. Milman says of Latin Christianity that it was “the Roman empire again extended over Europe by an universal code and a provincial government; by an hierarchy of religious *prætors* or pro-consuls, and a host of inferior officers, each in strict subordination to those immediately above them, and gradually descending to the very low-

est ranks of society: the whole with a certain freedom of action, but a constrained and limited freedom, and with an appeal to the spiritual Cæsar in the last resort." "This," says Schaff, "may be termed the age of *Christian legalism*, of *Church authority*. Personal freedom is here, to a great extent, lost in slavish subjection to fixed, traditional rules and forms. The individual subject is of account, only as the organ and medium of the general spirit of the Church. All secular powers, the state, science, art, are under the guardianship of the hierarchy, and must everywhere serve its ends. This is emphatically the era of grand universal enterprises, of colossal works, whose completion required the co-operation of nations and centuries; the age of the supreme outward sovereignty of the visible Church." M. Guizot confirms this view by his comments on the theological impress which the Church in the Middle Ages imparted to all intellectual exertion.

It is of great importance to understand the meaning of this great characteristic of uniformity, attaching to Mediæval Christianity.

Through all the provinces of nature there can be discerned a great two-fold fact or law; the fact or law of unity in variety. Unity in diversity is the law which in all cases distinguishes creation from chaos. And it is an unchanging principle that the wider the diversity, so it be ruled by one central law, the higher is the achievement of nature, the greater the perfection attained. Now Christianity contains in itself, potentially, not yet, it may be, worked out, the highest possible manifestation of this sublime law. Its unity is in Christ; "one Lord, one faith, one baptism;" its unifying law is love. Therefore, in whatever position a Christian is placed, with reference to the world or to Christians who dissent from certain of his views, he

must never, at the risk of abandoning essential Christianity, relinquish the hope of ultimate unity, or deny the obligation of striving to bring all Christians into one great temple, wide as the sky. But Christianity, along with its potential unity, brings also to humanity an expansion, a development, a variety unprecedented and illimitable. It opens, as we formerly saw, all the fountains of the human spirit. It can no more seal up these, in consistency with its true nature, than it can abjure the unity of its great charter of love. Now the Christianity of the Middle Ages was a great attempt—and so far it deserves admiration—to manifest fully the great Christian law of unity: but it omitted the kindred necessity which alone prevents living unity from becoming dead uniformity, the law of variety, the development of the individual life, the sacredness of those countless faculties and peculiarities of man, whose variegated glory and beauty surpass the fields of the earth and the plains of the sky, and will yet render a Christian humanity the richest and most beautiful of all the gardens of God.

While, however, this is true, it were not well to forget that mediaeval uniformity by no means suppressed all manifestation of intellectual vitality, petrified strong emotion, or prevented the gradual infiltration, into the mind of Europe, of deeper spiritualities than had dwelt in the systems of heathenism. Everything, indeed, wore a theological aspect; but if the walls of a vast temple shut out the free air of nature, and cast over all a dim religious light, there were, within that temple, many and great activities at work. The faith of the Middle Ages, be it what it might, searched infinitely deeper and rose infinitely higher, than any faith of Paganism. The hymns of the Church, the scholastic reasonings, the devout simplicity and earnest purity of med-

iæval painting, bear witness to the intensity of moral and intellectual life in those times. All the architectural relics of antiquity settle into dumb stolidity, or sink into elegant insignificance, beside the cathedral of the Middle Ages. All ancient poetry, even including that of *Æschylus*, is, so far as I am qualified to judge, a playful dallying with human emotion, compared with the “mystic, unfathomable song,” reaching to the lowest deeps of man’s spirit, of Dante. The Middle Ages present a vast uniformity, but no blank.

Mediæval civilization has three principal stages corresponding, closely enough, to those three into which we found Schaff dividing the Church history of that age, but which it may be well to contemplate somewhat differently. The first, we shall call the period before the Crusades; the second, that of the Crusades; the third, that of mediæval Catholicism in decay, and the gradual accumulation of materials for the Reformation epoch. I can say but a word of each of these.

In the first, the period before the Crusades, there is discernible, under countless individual phenomena, the going out of one great process,—that of gradually working out from the mind of Europe all remains, not only of the old Paganism, but of the superstitions of those strong northern tribes which overthrew the Roman empire. The conversion of those tribes was, at first, a very general, wholesale sort of operation. But although the Christianity with which they were indoctrinated was now far from pure, they were, in the centuries preceding the Crusades, gradually brought thoroughly to embrace it, and to conceive for it a deep enthusiasm. It may be affirmed, too, that in relation to the customs of the barbarians, the influence of the Church was generally salutary. It specially tended to improve

civil and criminal legislation. M. Guizot tells us that it is impossible to contrast the codes of the Church with those of the barbarians, without being struck with the superiority of the former. The Church exercised, also, a humanizing influence of a more general nature over the barbaric tribes, softening their rugged manners, and opposing particular customs of a gross or savage nature. It was, besides, for centuries, the most popular institution in existence; it afforded the most accessible, perhaps I might say the only, channel through which talent could find vent; not even as it sunk deeper and deeper into corruption, could the Church founded by the Galilean fishermen altogether abnegate its character as the Church of the people.

The eleventh and twelfth centuries are the era of the Crusades. In the thirteenth the enthusiasm died out. The Crusades constitute one of the most remarkable and imposing phenomena of history, and exercised, beyond question, a great influence on subsequent times. The heart of Europe thrilled for the first time to a common impulse. The consciousness of nations awoke. Christianity advanced to the East with—ominous token—a sword in its hand. It had not *come* from the East with a sword in its hand, otherwise it might have been as little successful in its contest with the West, as it proved in its contest with the East. But this is by the way. The Crusades were, in the circumstances of the case, thoroughly justifiable on political grounds; and, since the spiritual essence of Christianity was now deeply shrouded, there could not, humanly speaking, have been found any common excitement for the European nations, uniting so many lofty and noble elements, as that which sent them to rescue the Holy City from the hands of the infidel. Historians have enlarged upon the effects of the Crusades, tracing them in various directions. But

their greatest result, doubtless, was this,—to shake Europe from that comparative lethargy in which it had lain, to exercise the minds of men on certain broad, expanding conceptions, to strike the first spark of life into individual character.

In the centuries immediately preceding the Reformation, the veil which obscured the great principles of Christianity had become very dense. Christendom itself had an uneasy consciousness that all was not well; and I am not aware that, any one has since, been found altogether to defend the time. The various attempts made by councils to effect a reformation of manners indicated, if I may so speak, the sense of shame in the heart of the Christian peoples. Such efforts bore no important fruit, and the darkness grew thicker and thicker over Europe. In various places, indeed, the veil seemed for a moment to be rent asunder, and a ray of the old glory streamed through. Such a ray lingered long among the snows and precipices of the Alps, where the hymns of the Waldenses broke the eternal silence. Such a ray cheered the eye and heart of Wickliffe, and animated him to the denunciation of Roman corruption. Such a ray fell upon the face of Huss, lighting it with the old martyr smile, as he died at the stake. But still the veil was there.

The commencement of the sixteenth century is one of the most singular and critical conjunctures in the history of Europe and the world. An immense addition of intellectual material had been just made to the stores of the West. The revival of letters, in the middle of the fifteenth century, had brought back all the culture of antiquity into the general school-room of Europe. Printing, with all it even then implied, had lately been invented. America and the East Indies had been opened up. The immediate re-

sult was a vastly increased intellectual and artistic activity. But the direction taken by modern history could have been predicted from none of these things, and remains to all time one of those sublime Providential lessons, which have been so often given by God, and which man will not learn.

There is no fact in history more certain, than that the revival of letters had no tendency whatever to renovate the Papacy, to re-awaken moral life in Rome and in Europe. The learned refinement of the Popes brought with it the moral apathy of that Pagan lore on which it fed. "Debauchees," "poisoners," "atheists," are the words used by a writer of so temperate Protestantism as Mr. Macaulay, to describe the Popes who wore the tiara immediately before the Reformation. In a most true and literal sense, even the Papacy was saved by Protestantism. It was actually falling back into Paganism: it was rotting away: and that at the very time when the treasures of knowledge, which so many, more or less explicitly, believe and avow to be the one means of moral life for nations, were poured, with unprecedented exuberance, into the lap of Christendom.

In the beginning of the sixteenth century, two spectacles were presented on the stage of Europe. The proud Church of St. Peter's, at Rome, was slowly rising, in pilastered magnificence, towards Heaven, as if making its appeal for divine countenance: and an unknown Augustine monk, in the convent of Erfurth, his face pallid through fasting and watching, was on his knees, sending *his* earnest prayer to God for light. The fame of St. Peter's went over Christendom. Tetzel came selling indulgences to raise money for its completion. Yes; the somewhat puzzling progress of humanity had brought it to this: Christianity, in the first century, had been preached by Paul; Christianity in the sixteenth was preached by Tetzel! The supreme

enlightenment of the Revival of Letters had produced this last remarkable version of the Gospel, proclaimed with the warrant of the Father of Christendom, that if you paid so much money, your sins were forgiven you! But, as I said, Luther was on his knees. Over all the grandeur of St. Peter's, through all the noise which the furtherance of that grandeur made over Europe, above all the false enlightenment of resuscitated Paganism, that still small voice went up — even to the throne of God. And from *it* came the shaping of modern civilization! The Revival of Letters had not got near the heart of nations: on the 31st of October, 1517, Luther posted his theses on the Church door at Wittenberg; and in six weeks, Europe was awake. The philosophy, the arts, the poetry of antiquity had once more risen before the eyes of Europe: and once more God brought life to the world out of a despised Galilee, out of the Convent of Erfurth, and the New Testament of Martin Luther. That enlightenment, which had been mere dead fuel, choking the life out of Christendom, now, kindled by faith, burst forth into a true and dazzling illumination: that Reformation epoch commenced, which, dating from 1517 to 1688, is, I think, take it all in all, the *greatest* in the history of the human race. From this one fact might, I think, be deduced all the canons of history, and a whole philosophy of the human race.

The veil woven by human hands across the brightness of Christianity was now rent asunder from the top to the bottom. Those mighty principles which were, from the first, present in Christianity, came forth from the slumber of centuries. Never before had they obtained so wide a national extension. The Bible, in the vernacular tongues, was, for the first time, put into the hands of the people. Conceive the effect of that one change. “To give the history

of the Bible as a *book*," says Coleridge, "would be little less than to relate the origin or first excitement of all the literature and science that we now possess." The idea of a priesthood specially privileged to confer salvation was again struck down, and man once more confronted his God. A Protestant ministry arose; and I think that, if the history of the Protestant nations since the Reformation is considered, it will be found that, however many its short comings, there has never yet acted on the human mind a moral agency, on the whole so powerful and so benign as that of the Protestant ministry. But perhaps the most instructive of all the circumstances connected with the Reformation is the *completeness* with which it vindicated truth. We saw that Christianity introduced into civilization mighty principles, not only of moral but of social truth; that it raised man to his full stature, not only in relation to his God, not only as an individual, but in relation to his fellows. And the Reformation, in again unvailing the glories of Christianity, again addressed the whole nature of man. Moral truth sprung to life, and awoke its slumbering sister, social truth. Christianity led freedom by the hand to bless the nations. Great Britain and North America, the centres of civil liberty for the world, are also, and have been, the great centres of Protestantism.

If we contemplate the epoch of the Reformation, strictly so called, that which commenced with the posting of Luther's theses, and terminated with the close of the Puritan era in Great Britain; and if we embrace, as we ought, all the forms of intellectual activity exhibited by Protestant nations in that period; we shall find reason, I think, for the opinion I have expressed, that it was the greatest time—most abounding in great works and great men—that humanity has yet seen. Luther, Calvin, Bacon, Newton,

Shakspeare, Milton;—these stand in the very foremost file of humanity. The Institutes of the Christian religion of Calvin, published at twenty-seven, the Novum Organon of Bacon, the Principia of Newton, the Dramas of Shakspeare, the Paradise Lost of Milton,—these rank with the solitary achievements of the race, the heirlooms of nations, the palladia of civilizations. And beyond question, the spirit of the Reformation ruled and impelled this magnificent display of power. From the study of Newton to the camp of Gustavus Adolphus, from the slopes of Naseby, where Puritanism rolled resistless down hill after its Cromwell, to the midnight chamber, where all the earnestness of Puritanism was being gathered into one strain of immortal music by Milton, there worked the same mighty impulse, of re-invigorated faith and awakened intellect. Nor least, but perhaps greatest, of the manifestations of the Reformation spirit, was the departure from Delft Haven, in Holland, of that little ship Mayflower, which bore its desolate company of exiles to the deserts of North America, there to found that great Commonwealth, beside which all the glories of Spain's Popish kingdoms of the South were to grow faint and pale, and which, be its faults what they may, was to exhibit the greatest number of self-governing men that the world ever saw.

The history of Europe since the Reformation has, as I said, been shaped out by that event. Yet a doubt will urge its way into my mind, whether we can really view ourselves as heirs of the men of the Reformation, whether we still really breathe their atmosphere and inherit their spirit. We must not be too sure that advance of time has been advance in all respects. That progress of the species is truly a perplexing matter. Tetzel had certainly not progressed beyond Chrysostom or Ignatius. Modern Protes-

tant statesmen seem really to have made no remarkable advance upon Cromwell. Christian poetry has not been carried far beyond Milton's Hymn of the Nativity. Perhaps we may even yet have something to learn from the times of the Reformation: *possibly*, the wave of Christian Civilization has receded, and is only now gathering for another surge. Let us glance along the intervening space.

Popery, startled by the shock of the Reformation, roused itself in the sixteenth century to a new activity. It shook off the Paganism of the Leos and Bembos. Protestantism thus, as I suppose even Roman Catholics would in a sense admit, was the means of saving Romanism from sheer putrescence and destruction. But the history of the Papacy since the Reformation has proved that the resuscitation of its life was no sound and complete resuscitation, but rather a specious, an outwardly imposing, but an indubitable, lapse into a deeper disease. By associating itself with Jesuitism, it brought the abomination of desolation into the temple of God; and by allying itself universally, even in these days, with European despotism, it has denied the unity of truth, and visibly abdicated its right to lead the human intellect.

Turning to Protestantism, the view is partly cheering, and partly it is not. That intensity of faith, which marked the period of the Reformation, and which has manifested itself at all the great epochs of Christianity, can hardly, even by the most ardent admirer of the present time, be said to be now equally general. And if faith has failed, the shortcoming is important; for it is in faith that all the mighty deeds of nations are performed. But within the last fifty years, there has been a general and unmistakable improvement in this respect.

There is another defect in modern Protestantism, which is to me very evident, and which is of a serious, nay, if suf-

ferred to prevail, of a fatal kind. Protestantism has shown a strong tendency to recede from the completeness of what I may call the Reformation idea of truth; to break up that association of political and social with religious truth, which, with the Reformers, was indissoluble. The men who were in the van of Protestantism in the seventeenth century were the men to whom, under God, the world owes Anglo-Saxon freedom. The full development of the idea of intellectual freedom, of toleration, came somewhat later. But there has recently been displayed a tendency to lose more or less partially, more or less perfectly, both the one and the other. This has been occasioned by certain remarkable circumstances, in the general history of the last hundred years. Error and falsehood have, during that time, in two conspicuous cases, assumed the name of excellence and truth: and well-intentioned men have been startled from the real good by alarm at the counterfeit. Milton tells us that Satan, desirous to deceive Uriel the regent of the sun, assumed the shape of a stripling cherub, an angel of light. No doubt the subtle fiend would have adopted the semblance of one of Uriel's well-known and trusted friends. Now, supposing this whole transaction real, one is tempted to ask whether, after having been once deceived, Uriel, ever after, on the appearance of the angel whose shape Satan had assumed, fell into a nervous shudder, and looked with a suspicious, half-averted glance upon his friend. If so, his case corresponded precisely with that of certain modern Protestants. Freedom of judgment, searching of spirits, full and untrammelled use of reason can be separated neither from true Protestantism nor from true Christianity. But rationalism arose and assumed the name both of Christianity and of Protestantism. The assumption of the name of Protestantism was essentially false. The Reformation

was, as I said, a return to primitive Christianity: at all events, it was a religion. But the essential idea of religion is bound up with faith, and it at once loses name and nature if it *rests* on reason. Rationalism, whether in its childhood in Britain, its licentious youth in France, its aspiring manhood in Germany, or what is, I think, in certain respects, its *second* childhood among us at this moment, has been and must always be, in virtue of its central principle of deducing everything from reason, not a religion but a philosophy. As a philosophy, it may be good: when it offers itself as a religion, it is infidelity. It has called itself, however, Protestantism, and maintained that it is only a development of the Protestant principle of freedom of judgment. Hereupon start up many good men and hint an impeachment of freedom of judgment itself. Schlegel rushes into the iron embrace of infallibility and Rome. Other German divines, I understand, of perhaps stronger nature than Schlegel, also cower closer and closer under authority and prescription. Among ourselves, there could be pointed out indications of the same spirit. There is great talk of caution, of coming prepared, of refusing to hear what has not been fairly approved and stamped by orthodoxy. Now the very firmness of my opposition to rationalism would set me against the use of such methods to combat it. The adoption of such methods is surely nothing else than a confession that rationalism is powerful. It is surely, also, in this country as weak a policy as it is an unprotestant and unchristian proceeding. The young men of Great Britain, I imagine, will be more apt to obey the apostolic precept of holding fast what is good, by being exhorted boldly to put in force the other apostolic counsel, of proving all things. Cowardice and unfairness will never guard the portals of the Protestant Churches from error;

but there must be an insidious moral poison insinuating itself into the mind of him who would set them there. I do not say that an open and fair encounter of all forms of infidelity will in no case lead to submission to it. But on the other hand, who that knows the truth but will avow that there lies in it a might, on a fair field, to vanquish error? And whether or not, evil must not be done that good may come; Satan must not receive the right hand of fellowship though he present himself among the sons of God.

But not only has intellectual freedom been looked at somewhat askance. Civil freedom, the full, symmetrical development of all those activities which God has implanted in man as a social being, was felt by the Reformers, specially by the Puritans of England and Scotland, to be naturally associated with an advance to a higher moral and religious truth. In this they merely brought out, in their own completeness, the principles which, as we saw in the outset, Christianity introduced into civilization. But in the last century the name of freedom was defamed by being applied to Jacobinism, to wild anarchic Communism, and principles destructive of civilization. The result has been, not indeed to put in jeopardy that Anglo-Saxon freedom which was bequeathed to us from the epoch of the Reformation, but to introduce, into many Protestant minds, a certain jealousy and apprehension of all political aspiration, a certain leaning towards political repression, on the one hand, and apathy, on the other; a favor for galvanized order and ignoble security; a vagueness in the conception of political duty. The Protestantism of such minds must be sickly and one-sided, not strongly sinewed, open-faced, and full-grown, as that which, at the Reformation, wedded civil to religious liberty. It is altogether too high an honor conferred upon falsehood, to permit it to make us dread truth!

I am profoundly impressed with the idea that the comparatively shrunken and sectional look, which attaches to our modern Protestantism, is traceable, in great measure, to the causes I have now endeavored to penetrate. Protestantism is no longer in possession of the broad fields of political life, and much of the intellectual activity of the age, much of the dominant literature of Protestant nations, has cast off its pervading influence. Once more Protestantism must assay the great Christian duty of making *all* things new.

But there are aspects of modern Christian civilization which are of a highly encouraging character. In the first place, as in Germany the rationalistic infidelity was carried to its highest development, so in Germany it has been met by a counter-revolution, which has long been in process, and of which the perfect triumph is becoming day by day more certain. The modern evangelical school of German theology is one of the most cheering and glorious spectacles presented in the whole course of Church history. Infidelity has been made, in the wisdom of Providence, to serve what seems its natural end, to lead to a more accurate study of Scripture, than was ever before engaged in; and to broaden and deepen the foundations of all the defences of the faith. Had there been no Lessing, Paulus, or Baur, there might have been no Neander, no Tholuck, no Hengstenberg, no Schaff, no Stier. And, let me ask, if these men had simply stopped their ears, and denounced without answering rationalism, would the result have been so consistent with the honor of man, or the glory, or the law, of God? The *use* of reason turned to shame the *worship* of reason.

But next, Christianity has in these last times once more vindicated its true essence by embodying itself in philan-

thropy, by again breathing in a soft south wind of love over the face of civilization. Among the fathers of the early Church, the saints and martyrs of the olden time, might have walked the holy Howard. His influence is still amidst us, working in each of those countless schemes of beneficence by which our social evils are one by one attacked, which have always been blessed in their promoters, and which will, I believe, be more and more blessed in their objects. With the name of Howard, among the fathers of Christian philanthropy, may be associated that of Wilberforce. The same spirit which put an end to the agonizing atrocities of our prison system put an end to slavery in the possessions of Great Britain. Appropriate work! The Christianity that brought life to the gladiator in those first centuries brought liberty to the slave in these last. And whether the deed was fully and consistently carried out or no by Great Britain, it cannot, I think, be doubted that, in the emancipation of Britain's slaves, the death-blow was given to the universal system.

Last of all, among those cheering and vital symptoms of modern Christianity to which I can refer, our attention is claimed for the modern missionary movement. What Christian heart does not beat high, at the thought of that mild but piercing radiance of divine light, now glimmering visibly along all the borders of heathenism? The thick clouds are edged with white, and seem, after the long night, to be stirring on the mountain-side, as if to collect themselves for finally rolling up, and opening the valleys to the day. It has been said that "beside every group of wild men in the ethnological department of the Crystal Palace, the Missionary could place a contrasting group of their Christianized countrymen." Again, "The Old Book, the Book of our Redeemer's gift and our fathers' faith . . . has

been gradually ascending; taking to itself new tongues, spreading open its page in every land, printed in Chinese camps, pondered in the Red man's wigwam, sought after in Benares, a school-book in Feejee, eagerly bought in Constantinople, loved in the kloofs of Kafirland; while the voices of the dead from Assyria to Egypt have been lifted up to bear it witness." Among the millions of India, there is a listening and a surmise; amid the strange fascinating roar of civilization, advancing from the West, is heard the deep, still music of the Gospel; a quivering here and there, a faint ruddy flush as of life, seems to announce that the swoon of superstition, unbroken for a thousand years, may ere long pass away. The all-important preliminary victory that had to be won over anti-Christian prejudice on the part of the new lords of India is no longer doubtful. The change which has taken place in the way in which Indian statesmen regard, on the one side, the Christian Missionary, and, on the other, the old superstitions, cannot be better indicated than by citing the words in which it has been expressed by one who is in every way qualified to speak, being himself a great Indian statesman:—I mean Mr. Macaulay. In his speech upon the Gates of Somnauth, Mr. Macaulay spoke as follows:—"Some Englishmen, who have held high office in India, seem to have thought that the only religion which was not entitled to toleration and respect was Christianity. They regarded every Christian Missionary with extreme jealousy and disdain; and they suffered the most atrocious crimes, if enjoined by the Hindoo superstition, to be perpetrated in open day. It is lamentable to think how long after our power was firmly established in Bengal, we, grossly neglecting the first and plainest duties of the civil magistrate, suffered the practices of infanticide and suttee to continue unchecked. We

decorated the temples of the false gods. We provided the dancing girls. We gilded and painted the images to which our ignorant subjects bowed down. We repaired and embellished the car under the wheels of which crazy devotees flung themselves at every festival to be crushed to death. We sent guards of honor to escort pilgrims to the places of worship. We actually made oblations at the shrines of idols. All this was considered, and is still considered by some prejudiced Anglo-Indians of the old school as profound policy. I believe that there never was so shallow, so senseless a policy. We gained nothing by it. We lowered ourselves in the eyes of those whom we meant to flatter. We led them to believe that we attached no importance to the difference between Christianity and heathenism. Yet how vast that difference is! I altogether abstain from alluding to topics which belong to divines. I speak merely as a politic anxious for the morality and for the temporal well-being of society. And, so speaking, I say that to countenance the Brahminical idolatry, and to discountenance that religion which has done so much to promote justice, and mercy, and freedom, and arts, and sciences, and good government, and domestic happiness; which has struck off the chains of the slave, which has mitigated the horrors of war, which has raised women from servants and playthings into companions and friends; is to commit high treason against humanity and civilization." Still farther east than India, China has heard tidings of a true celestial empire, from the lips of apostolic men, who have cast behind them all the refinement and social pleasure of Europe, as Paul cast behind him the philosophy of Greece and the lordliness of Rome. Beautiful is this return of the Christian morning from the West to the East. Christianity does not now go forth against heathenism, as

in the old crusading days, clad in visible armor and bearing an earthly sword. It steps gently like the dawn, its only weapons the shafts of light, wearing the breast-plate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. Clothed thus in the armor of God, if faith does not waver and love continues to burn, it *will* conquer.

## IX.

### THE MODERN UNIVERSITY;

OR,

### EDUCATION IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

SINCE Charlemagne, with the instinct of a true prince, set himself to re-illumine the torch of knowledge in the West, then faint and flickering as if about to expire, while it still cast a fair radiance in the East, in the golden prime of good Haroun Alraschid; since shallow monks, in dim cloisters, chid the lagging hours in strains of ancient eloquence and song; even since Pope Nicholas, in the centre of literature and art at Bologna, signed the charter of the University of remote Glasgow;—what a change has passed over the face of this western world! So complete, so profound, so pervasive has it been, that our very words have changed their meaning, and bear the same relation to their former selves, that the crest of the latest cotton lord bears to the banner of the old crusader. Might we not, for instance, puzzle ourselves not a little, in the attempt to reconcile the significance belonging to the term University, in modern times, with that it once bore? The meaning of the word was, at its origin, simple and definite. There had been schools in various parts of Europe. Padua, Naples, Salamanca, Lyons, to mention no more, could each boast a

seminary. But the range of subjects over which their instructions extended was limited. In the thirteenth century the school of Paris embraced, for the first time, within its curriculum, the whole circle of the sciences; and, appealing to its *studium universale*, challenged for itself the name of University. The sphere of its influence without was universal, no less than the range of its subjects within. Its decrees affected the deliberations of monarchs. The awe of it lay upon peoples, for it was one of the guardian powers of the faith, and its breath lit the flames of persecution. It was the centre of attraction for all who, not desirous of immuring themselves in monasteries, yet felt the fascination of intellectual light. It alone afforded access to books: and in this lay, perhaps, its greatest power, its noblest distinction. The character of universality and soleness thus eminently belonged to the great school of Paris, and it was well named a University. But can any modern University, expressly so called, vindicate to itself a similar character? Can any Sorbonne now consign its victims to the flames? Can any four walls now inscribe upon their portal that within them alone burns the lamp of knowledge? Did not the University change altogether the relation in which it stood to civilization, when it lost that august and all-important monopoly, the monopoly of books?

It may look pedantic, but yet derive countenance from the aspect of things, to say that the modern University, if we will insist upon confining the word to a significance akin to that it once possessed, has now extended itself over the whole world of civilization. The old walls, beaten down by daring men, conspicuous among them John Faust and Martin Luther, have permitted the light they contained to stream out over the world, kindling illumination in a thousand places. The old University is still here, but it

does no more than somewhat concentrate the rays it formerly monopolized. It is a class-room, not a University. Knowledge is dispensed in all quarters, with little or no reference to it. If the University must retain the character of universality,—if the University is the sole seat of knowledge,—where can we draw the furrow to mark its present boundary?

All this, it may be exclaimed, is commonplace, and the iteration of a truism might be somewhat more concise. But it will not be amiss to remember, that truism is just the raw material from which truth — practically available in clearing the ideas and dissipating error — is obtained. Truism in itself is useless enough: you do not consider ingenuous youth profoundly instructed when they are familiar with the axioms of mathematics; but when Newton, skilfully availing himself of geometrical truisms, proclaims a truth, at which the Universe opens to the mind's eye in endless perspective, as if again the word had been spoken, and mental had succeeded to physical light, do you not acknowledge a certain virtue in those same original truisms? Is it impossible, to illustrate a small thing by a very great, that we, setting ourselves on some coigne of vantage, and taking in our hand, by way of spyglass, this truism about the unprecedented universality of the modern University, may have some glimpses, both into the nature of education in our day, and into the particular functions of what still calls itself, distinctively, a University?

The class-rooms of our modern University, of which, as we said, the express seat of learning is one, are very numerous. In every reading room, we see such a class-room. Every public library is another. Every Mechanics' Institute is a third. The British Museum must be reckoned among our class-rooms. The exhibition of 1851 was for a

season a well-frequented lecture room. The American Congress and the British Parliament are each departments of this extensive Institution.

Who are our professors? They are very numerous. Their uniforms, their emoluments, their subjects, their modes of tuition, are marked by the boundless diversity of nature. One great class of professors have been styled "able editors"—perhaps with a touch of irony. Standing in a relation to these, in some respects, it may be, analogous to that in which the tutors in the old University stood to the occupants of chairs, are certain functionaries called reporters. These are seen to advantage in a gallery, scrimp enough of room, overlooking the benches of the British House of Commons. They have in general large heads, and the look of not being apt to be carried off their legs by surges of parliamentary eloquence. Both the editorial professors and their assistants have a number of students so prodigiously great, that it would be absurd to think of collecting them under one roof. So the instruction is conveyed by means of a singular and highly ingenious mechanism, invented by the John Faust previously mentioned. With the aid of this mechanism, vulgarly called a printing-press, the teachings of these learned professors and their tutors are brought within the reach of millions, and every household becomes a class-room. They compel into their service the intellect, theoretical and practical, of whole Parliaments and Cabinets. The speeches in which honorable members condense the study and reflection devoted by each to his chosen and particular subject, it is theirs to bring into direct communication with the national mind. The practical education, which may consist in observing and considering the relations of the kingdoms of the world, as discussed in Parliament and

Cabinet,—the mental influence which may reside in the mere contemplation, with a comprehensiveness and accuracy not to have been dreamed of in former ages of contemporary world-history,—they are the men who dispense. Did they confine their discussions to the relations that subsisted between Rome and Carthage, between Athens and Sparta, they would run no risk of lacking recognition as engaged in University instruction. But as it is only the commonplace present, of which they take the lineaments,—commonplace as the soil of this present Europe, bearing in it the dust of all former generations, the promise of all future harvests,—they are apt to be thought not at all on a level with gowned professors. Yet what were all the might and power of the Sorbonne, to the influence they now wield over the destinies of men?

But ought we not to assign a separate place to those modern dispensers of knowledge, who are technically called publishers? These have vastly increased the number of pupils, and daringly extended the range of subjects, in our modern University. They also use the mechanism previously alluded to. From all corners of the earth, they bring together stores of knowledge, and pour them out before their students. By a flight equally wide and silent, they pass along the course of time, snatch from every century the treasure it broods over in the gathering twilight of antiquity, and expose the precious horde to view in all thoroughfares. No man can resist their summons, if they only command him to teach. The Humbolts, the Leibnitzes, the Laplaces, the Newtons, the Galens, the Strabos, of science; the Macaulays, the Gibbons, the Humes, the Carlyles, the Hallams, the Xenophons, the Thucydideses, of history; the Wordsworths, the Miltons, the Shakspeares, the Homers, of poetry; in a word, the great speakers, writers, singers

of all ages, travel, under their patronage, over all shires, penetrate into all dwellings, and deliver, night and day, their courses of professional instruction. Through the exertions of such men as, say, Henry G. Bohn, every one who can, by any effort of parsimony, muster a shilling a week, nay, a shilling a month, to be employed for literary purposes, who has the necessary intellect, and a certain measure of what also is requisite, leisure, may form for himself, a very accurate notion as to what the past actually was, and how far what learned men have been telling him, of the great authors and actors of antiquity, may be depended upon. There is a certain intimacy with an author, which only a knowledge of the language in which he writes can impart. The mode of expression and the mode of thought are so closely allied, and the former is so graphically indicative of the character of an epoch, that whosoever would dramatically present to his imagination any period of the world's history, will do well resolutely to urge his way to an acquaintance with its language. Who can imagine that all the authors whom Gibbon marshals on his page, stepped along with exactly the same superb strut as the historian of the Decline and Fall? As translated by him, they all do so. But this by no means invalidates the assertion, that the contribution of abstract thought or concrete beauty, which any ancient philosopher or poet made to the stores of the race, can be estimated, with substantial correctness, through translation. On this point, one fact is conclusive. The faith of Christendom rests on translation. Nor has it ever been denied that, whatever their individual defects, the vernacular Bibles convey, on the whole, a correct idea of the meaning and intent of the original writers. Though ignorant of Greek or Latin, the poor man of the present day may hear very distinctly the great voices of Greece and

Rome. He may judge for himself of the nature and range of ancient knowledge, as exhibited,—so the learned inform him,—in its final consummation and perfect form by Aristotle. He may follow Plato in his loftiest flights, and learn what was the highest pitch of spiritualism and purity attained by ancient philosophy. He may form for himself a conception of those wild and gloomy terrors, which he has so often heard connected with the name of Æschylus. He may admire the chaste fervor of Sophocles. He may enjoy the light gracefulness and ease of Livy. He may catch a glimpse of Cicero's grave pomposity, as he elaborates, point by point, his stately argument. He may even, although this is more doubtful, have some idea of the exhaustless vivacity, the hearty, irrepressible, garrulousness, the pre-Raphaelite minuteness and dashing vigor, the fiery vividness and intensity, of old Homer.

We suspect there were no functionaries connected with the ancient University, exactly correspondent to those lecturers, more or less professional, who now, numbered by the thousand, perambulate at least Great Britain and America. These are the irregulars of the army of knowledge, the Cossacks, the Bashi-Bazouks, the guerilla fighters. The most striking characteristic of their efforts is, probably, their variety, including a degree of excellence as well as range of subject. There is, perhaps, no stage of stupidity definable, short of express idiocy, at which it becomes impossible to compose a lecture, to which an audience may be got to listen for an hour. On the other hand, Carlyle, Ruskin, Thackeray, have taken rank among our public lecturers, and, while doing so, have made most important and valuable additions to our literature. Perhaps those old knights of erudition, who used, like admirable Crichtoun, to traverse Europe in the Middle Ages, challenging the learned, at each

University town, to dispute with them, made the nearest approach to our modern lecturers.

This general glance at the world-wide modern University reveals a prospect, which seems to us, on the whole, cheering. Viewed in one very important light, educational systems, and even political constitutions, have it for their object to put tools into the hand that can use them, to enable those specially gifted to speak or to do, to obtain an audience or a field. This object is now, in great measure, achieved. The poorest child is taught to read; and once genius is in these days taught to read, what is it which it may not know? We have heard, it may be, just long enough, of mute, inglorious Miltons. In no age of the world, can such have been very rife. Will and power generally find or make a way for themselves; it is an integral part of their nature to do so. Is it not said that the feeble mushroom will force its way to the light, upheaving stone pavement? Do we not see, every spring, the frail blade piercing the rude earth? Nature, rigidly economical in all her ways, does not lightly throw from her the inscrutable gift of genius. There never yet fell the smallest grain of wheat from the great granary of nature; far less can she afford to lose a Milton, or strike any like him mute. If faculty has not been originally given, no education will supply it. If genius exists, an awakening voice is all that is required. Who is so degraded that he cannot now hear such a voice? If, by some magical exercise of vision, one could perceive, beneath the tattered uniform of a little crossing-sweeper, the faculties of a Bacon, a Newton, a Watt, he might confidently predict that that crossing-sweeper would one day stand before kings.

But supposing there were among our working classes, a few, or not a few, mute Miltons, are we, therefore, to con-

sider them inglorious, are we to pronounce them unrewarded? Though it is one grand result of the general diffusion of knowledge, that it secures to society talents which would otherwise have been lost, are we to consider distinction or wealth the highest reward for which working men ought to look in pursuing knowledge? The reverse is emphatically the truth. No man has risen to a conception of the peculiar dignity belonging to him as the possessor of mind, no man has breathed the atmosphere of the poet, the philosopher, the scholar, who cannot find, in the invigoration and expansion of his own faculties, and the contemplation of truth and beauty in themselves, the loftiest inducements and rewards of study. The ambition to improve one's position in the world is honorable and salutary; it may happen, too, that a mechanical profession has been originally wrong chosen, and that an ascent to competence or opulence is possible only through its abandonment and an entrance upon literary pursuits. But as a rule, it may be laid down, that self-culture ought to be dissociated from the idea of material advancement, and not contemplated as a means of success. We are deeply convinced that the aspirations after knowledge which pervade our working classes are largely vitiated by this taint of selfishness, by low material ambition, whether directed chiefly to notoriety or to pecuniary profit. To be is in all senses better than to seem; better, also, than to have. To a true man, fame is valuable precisely in so far as he can solemnly append to it his own signature. Biassed as we are apt to be, in forming a judgment of ourselves, difficult as it is to survey ourselves and our lives in their bare, objective reality, the approbation of his fellows will always be an assistance to a man who can turn it to account. Although every one ought to retain a right of appeal against the public opinion,

and though that opinion is, perhaps, never quite correct as to any man, it invariably contains or indicates some important truth, and errs totally in no case. Renown may thus add substantially to a man's happiness, by affirming and establishing his self-respect. But the mere exaltations upon other men's shoulders, the mere being stared at by foolish thousands,—this, no man of any strength of character will care for, this only the vain, the prurient, the feeble man will regard. Nor is the attainment of a high position in respect of worldly possessions necessary to happiness. One rank in life may be, in some respects, better adapted to yield enjoyment than another; but it will be found that severely impartial nature works such strange enchantment, by her unnoticed ministers, custom and habit, that there is more of resemblance between all ranks than of difference between any. Is it in cruelty or in kindness, that the laborer is just as warm under his fustian jacket, as the duke under his ermine; that the carriage, in which the millionaire lolls to-day, is not in the least softer or more pleasant to his limbs, than the cab in which, venturing on a bold stroke for once, he went with his young wife on a holiday excursion twenty years ago; that the dinner eaten in the shade of the hedge in the interval of labor, is no whit less savory or satisfying, than the turtle and champagne, consumed beneath the blaze of lamps and to the sound of music? Doubtless it is in kindness, and none the less so that just enough of beneficent delusion is permitted to secure the upward ambition, the striving attitude, of all ranks. The toiler will always think of the padded coach as supporting such aching bones as those to which he feels it would be such luxury; the hungry peasant will always think of rich dainties, as enjoyed with that keen appetite which makes his own crust as sweet, if he knew it, as the rich man's delicacies. But at

all events, we may, on the whole, pronounce, that what is generally understood as success is in no degree essential to happiness; that, while real wants are supplied, and acquired wants are few, a man is reasonably sure of attaining the common level of human enjoyment. What, then, are those other rewards, beyond fame and fortune, which attend noble self-culture? They are ill to define; they are of those things not, seemingly, intended for minute definition: but it is not well with him who can form no idea of them. So far, indeed, it is easy to see. The natural activity of every faculty is productive of pleasure. The habit, therefore, of exercising the reason in thought, the imagination in conception, the æsthetic sensibility in the perception of beauty, the memory, even, in storing up facts, will afford a most delicate and intense pleasure. By means of books, a man makes himself at home in all times and all countries. Whatever there is in him of curiosity, of sensibility, may be gratified. Aided by imagination and sympathy, he may go round the world in his arm-chair. But beyond all this, which belongs to the region of simple psychological fact, there is a loftier reward attending the highest self-culture, not by any means definable. Does not an inextinguishable instinct tell a man, that by becoming more powerful in intellect, more true in feeling, more wide in knowledge, he gains a step in the order of being, to which all the distinction of earthly nobilities is but dust and tinsel? Is there not an instinct, imperishable as our immortality, assuring us that there will one day be a grand equalization, re-adjustment rather, of ranks, in accordance with the patents of nobility from Almighty God, possessed by each? Yes, in the bare fact that I become a greater and better man, larger in faculty and knowledge, more fitted to comprehend

this universe and glorify my God, lies the noblest incitem-  
ment and the proudest reward of study.

It is truly a stirring thought, that the man who bends to his work in the shop or the furrow can now catch sight, as if beckoning him to join them, of the great of all time; that the modern University stands open and cannot again be closed. It cannot be reasonably doubted that the general standard of intelligence among the broader orders is higher in these ages than it ever was before. The home of the modern workman, with its newspaper and its shelf of books, is a very different place from the serf's hut of the olden time. Not the shallowest, depend upon it, of our itinerant lecturers, but casts abroad seeds of thought that here and there take root. The instances of self-culture, successful in the most obvious sense, furnished by recent history, would fill a library.

But we must not allow ourselves to fall into the error of supposing that we have yet stated the whole truth, or at least that there is no qualification, of an important kind, to be made. The modern University is extensive as we have seen, and stands with its gates wide open. But does capacity to enter correspond to the comprehensiveness of the invitation given? If the healing waters of knowledge are abundant, can all men drink of them? To listen to platform oratory, one would be inclined to say that the question is to be met by an unqualified affirmative. But a more careful consideration reveals the fact that, however the modern University may stand, in regard to the number of its professors and students, it can bear no comparison with the old, in reference to the degree of scholarship to which it can bring its children. We perfect our sciences, of astronomy, of history, of polities, filling library after library; we gather together the flowerage of poetry from the Vedas of

the Ganges to the Sagas of Norway ; we heap up, tier after tier, the philosophical systems in which men have attempted to think out the secret of the world : and having made this great treasure-house accessible to all, we are ready to exclaim that the world at length is taught, that ignorance can exist no longer. More, we feel, we cannot do ; and it is almost cruel to tell us that our effort is to a great extent in vain. Yet the stern fact is even so.

The physical expansion of modern times — the extension of man's dominion over nature, in all its powers and in all its regions, which has marked the recent period,— has, while adding to the material resources of the race, contributed also, in the strictest sense, to its intellectual advancement. Every practical art has a scientific, a theoretic side. Navigation improves geography ; commerce promotes natural history ; mining and railway cutting advance geology. But inasmuch as man is capable of only so much work at a time, and the labor of the hand tends to render impossible the proportionate labor of the brain, there can be no doubt whatever that the enormous physical energy of the present time acts as a counteractive to the development of pure intellectual energy among the working classes. Looking broadly, indeed, at the facts of the case, it is safe to make at once the generalization, that a high state of intellectual culture, on the part of the broadest class in any community, is, and must continue, an imagination. The mechanic, the miner, the ploughman, who has to lay down daily his strength and his time as the price of his daily bread, can never become intellectually so cultivated as his brethren of the more leisurely classes. We do not go into any invectives against the mammonism of the times. We are not of opinion that the working classes have less time and strength left for intellectual exertion in the pres-

ent day, than they had at former periods. On the contrary, it seems to us they never had so much as now. But there are conditions attached to the very existence of human society, under the present dispensation, which confine high mental culture within certain limits. It is easy to draw fanciful pictures, showing well on platforms, and so life-like that even a Lord Stanley deceives by them first himself and then his audience, in which the workman is exhibited, after his ten hours' labor, devoting his hour or couple of hours in the evening, to the pursuit of some science, to be gradually and comfortably mastered. But the workman himself will assure you of the simple fact, of which physiological considerations might have previously convinced you, that his mind, after ten hours' labor, unless of no ordinary calibre, finds science insufferably dull, and if fit for any exertion at all, falls back on novel-reading. The truth is, the highly cultivated have always been, and will always remain, a class. In our days, the class has widened, and it may widen still more: but a class it remains and must remain. There are, first, the professionally learned, those set apart by the community and paid to instruct it, the occupants of professorial chairs and the like. Next, there is the large class of leisure, of necessity belonging to so highly developed a state of civilization as that of Great Britain and America; the nobility of wealth and title, and the whole body of large annuitants. Of this class, the better portion will always signalize themselves by a love of letters. The learned professions make a class by themselves, directly representing a large amount of intellectual culture. We are inclined to think that, among those actively engaged in mercantile pursuits, the opportunities of mental cultivation are not, on the whole, much above those belonging to what is strictly called the working class. The merchant of Man-

chester or New York is, after a hard day's work, almost or altogether as unfit for fresh intellectual exertion as the blacksmith or carpenter. He is also, perhaps, still more apt to lose his leisure hours in ostentatious, joyless, frivolous festivity. His information is apt to be bounded by his daily newspaper. The rule begins to apply to his ease, which extends over the whole working class, that the man who is by nature uncommonly endowed, whose mental organization is of extraordinary robustness, will overcome physical exhaustion, improve the fleeting hour, enter for himself the great modern University, and attain a high standard of mental culture; while his brethren in general are capable of but slight mental toil, and will enjoy but little mental pleasure. The Hugh Miller, his hands bleeding, his bones aching, with putting stone over stone in the wet drain, will find relaxation, comfort, and the means of advancement, in the scientific or philosophical treatise; the masons who toiled by his side during the day will drowse and nod by his side, over the evening fire.

A consideration of those conditions of physical labor, by which the workman is prevented from availing himself of the stores of knowledge now at his command, is fitted to incite us to lend all aid and encouragement, so far as is consistent with the requirements, scientifically classified and understood, of the social system, to the efforts made to put a larger amount of time at his disposal. Of all the arguments to be urged in support of their objects, by those associations which set themselves to secure a weekly half-holiday, a diminution of the daily hours of labor, a release of children under a certain age from all physical toil, and so on, the most powerful is that which bears reference to the abundance of materials for self-culture provided for the working man, but which he, shut in by the iron fences

of toil, cannot, in any proportionate measure, enjoy. The work of the world must be done. It will not be done without the horny hand and the sweating brow. But it is one of the grandest aims of civilization, so far to relax the intensity of physical labor, that mental labor, with its attendant mental joys, will become more and more possible. It is a poor and pusillanimous political economy, which will altogether sacrifice the mental interests of the community to the physical; which will shrink from continuing the child at school until a foundation for self-culture is thoroughly laid, or which will fear to insist that it remains, during life, at least possible, that a superstructure be raised.

And now, before finally quitting our coigne of vantage, let us have a single look at the old University. Though now but a class-room, it has by no means ceased to have important functions. In the olden time, it was its part to nurse the future. But for its fostering care, infant knowledge might have pined and died. But the babe waxed in strength, and went abroad, proud in acquirement, boundless in ambition, in need of no further nursing, the full-grown, brawny Present. The University, which had been his cradle, could no longer be his dwelling. But the Past, an old decrepit crone, but of great wisdom, and which the world ought not readily to let die, turned into the vacant halls. The University became the protector and preserver of the Past, and the dispenser of its old-world sapience. The Universities in these days guard the books of the sybil; they guarantee to the public that the treasures of antiquity are safe; and they give certification of reasonable correctness in that translation, through which alone men in general will possess themselves of the thought of former times.

But this is not their sole use. They are, so to speak, a standing indication of what education, in the highest sense,

must always be. The sermon in their old stones is this, that a certain separation from the stream of general activity, a certain calm and concentration, a certain deliberation and method, are necessary to intellectual culture. "The grand school-master," says Carlyle, "is practice;" and if, in using the word education, we had no special reference to thought as distinguished from action, we should not hesitate to affirm his remark. But by the general consent of mankind, the word is, on the whole, appropriated to that training which results specially in the *knowledge* of old truth, or the discovery of new, which fits out the scholar and thinker, as distinguished from the warrior, the merchant, the politician. And in order to be educated in this sense, in order to attain the power of viewing effects in their causes, of embracing multitudinous facts in broad generalized views, of realizing past times and men in clear imaginative distinctness, of reaching the unchanging, in truth and beauty, beneath that garb which has varied in every age, the calm represented by University life is indispensable. Of course, the mightiest men will prove their sovereignty by triumphing over all rules. A Shakspeare shows you the present, laughing, fighting, dancing, working, weeping, with life in every line of the countenance; yet the wealth of the whole past, the perennial truth and beauty of all time, are in his picture. And he drew that picture for the Globe Theatre, perhaps in brief moments snatched from merriment and the Mermaid Tavern. But the general fact is sure; and the stately old University must ever remain to us, to proclaim that the atmosphere of study is an atmosphere of silence. It is an emblem of the stillness of thought, amid the tumult and haste of action.

For all that is said, on platforms and elsewhere, in these times, on the subject of self-culture, the matter is, by no

means, easy of discussion. The present is a time of boundless possibility, but the perils and temptations to which the students are exposed may also be said to be boundless. If there never was a time — and surely there never was — when a powerful intellect, carefully, assiduously, determinedly applied, could do more, there never, also, was a time, when severe toil was more necessary, or when arrangement, selection, sagacity, were less to be dispensed with. Most earnestly would one say to him who, in the nineteenth century, desires to educate himself, Beware of seeking for entertainment, and insisting on the conjunction of amusement with instruction. The goddess of wisdom, old Pallas Athene, was a stern and martial goddess; she wore not the light scarf of the Naiad, nor courted the graces of the Paphian Queen; on her head was a helmet, on her brow the austerity of truth. She required a pure and total allegiance, and wisdom and knowledge are apt always to do so. There are some laws which do not vary; and the tough sinews of the Norwegian pine will knit themselves together on the plains of Hindostan, before strength of character and depth of knowledge are attained without severe exertion. "Difficulty," said Burke, "is a severe instructor, set over us by the supreme ordinance of a parental guardian and legislator, who knows us better than we know ourselves, as he loves us better too. *Pater ipse colendi haud facilem esse viam voluit.*"

## X.

### THE PULPIT AND THE PRESS.

IN no age of the world were startling novelties transmuted into commonplaces, and paradoxes changed into truisms, so speedily as that in which we live. This remark is itself a truism, and requires, therefore, no proof or illustration. But it may not be altogether so trite to observe, that if these novelties acquire a speedy currency, they are apt, from the very fact, to retain their precise original form, with the exact measure of truth, half-truth, or mere plausibility, they at first embodied. An age of travelling is an age of a thousand acquaintanceships and few friendships. You see a face, you enter into chat, you become in a few hours familiar with accent and expression, but next day your companion takes a different route, and you part for ever. The intimate and sympathizing knowledge, the gradually-woven and well-tested bonds of feeling and association, the habitual regard mellowing more and more into affection, which are the characteristics of friendship, cannot so originate. We imagine that our railway-train acquaintanceships have their parallel in our intellectual world: the faces of truths are seen, but their hearts remain hidden; they glance past us, leaving, it may be, the recollection of their outward form, but seldom embraced with thorough and

earnest comprehension. As in the other case, too, there is an extreme and perilous likelihood that the homely or the profound thought attract no attention, while the gilded counterfeit, all smiles and plausibility, be at once and cordially accepted.

It is a remark common among commonplace, that the newspaper has altogether, or to a large extent, superseded the pulpit. It was Mr. Carlyle, we think, in '*Sartor Resartus*', who first broadly asserted the fact. '*A Preaching Friar*', these are his words, 'settles himself in every village, and builds a pulpit which he calls a newspaper. Therefrom he preaches what most momentous doctrine is in him for man's salvation ; and dost not thou listen and observe ?' This is but the key-note of a strain which has since been played with a thousand variations, but without essential alteration of a single note ; not a fresh gleam of light has, to our knowledge, been shed upon the subject ; the original assertion has neither been questioned in itself nor pressed to its consequences ; and in the meantime, in all heads and over all columns, there float hazy notions of the transference of priestly functions from the pulpit to the press, of the prophetic mission of the journalist, of the destiny of the broad-sheet to regenerate the world, and so on.

We venture the assertion, that in all this there is a great amount of superficiality and mistake ; that the generalization by which pulpit and press are confounded is false. If so, the matter may be serious. True generalization is the ultimate fruit of philosophy ; false generalization is error armed with the sword of logic. True generalization is the result of accurate induction ; the synthesis growing gradually out of the analysis : and on the accuracy of the previous analysis will depend the accuracy of those particular assertions which synthesis empowers. A false generali-

zation covers innumerable particular errors, and prevents, in each case, the truth from being known. In the case before us, for instance, if preacher and journalist are convertible terms, we cease to inquire whether their spheres of operation, their mode of mental action, the nature of their influence, and the tests by which they are to be tried, are really the same or different. By classing them under one appellation, we may be misinterpreting certain of the most important phenomena of our time; we may be introducing confusion into our entire theory of the modern social development. We think it will be found not devoid of interest, and may prove rich in suggestion, to investigate deliberately the whole matter, and endeavor to read off a few of the facts and lessons in world-history, offered by the present aspect of preaching and journalism.

A first glance at the subject reveals almost all that has hitherto been perceived. The influence of the pulpit does not bulk so largely in the public eye as it did in former ages. Not to mention the time when the monastery was the retreat of learning and the source of knowledge, how different was the state of matters when Knox thundered against Queen Mary from the pulpit of St. Giles's, or when the divines met at Westminster! In the whole age of the Reformation, the pulpit was, more or less expressly, a political institution. The preacher was a politician. His words, delivered to his congregation, determined royal marriages, thinned or crowded the ranks of political parties, directed the movements of armies. Whatever may now be discussed in the leading article of a modern newspaper, was then more or less directly treated of in the pulpit. Knox, it has been said, was a kind of king in Scotland; Henderson was one of the leading statesmen of his day. The blind veneration for the clergy which had marked the ages of

Popery, was succeeded by a more reasonable deference, that seemed as secure. Endowed no longer in the popular esteem with religious infallibility, the ministers could not alienate that power which was the necessary result of their intellectual superiority — their breadth of view and extent of culture. They were the guides of public opinion. They had the ear of the community. The necessary result was, that they wielded indirectly a vast civil power; that the attempt to put down Knox would have been resented as we should now resent an interference with the freedom of the press, and that the prerogative of Charles was less powerful than the popularity of Roundhead preachers. The altered state of things is obvious. The Church has receded from direct political influence, and the press has advanced in towering prominence. Queen Elizabeth tuned her pulpits; a politician of the Long Parliament hearkened diligently for the public voice as expressed by the clergy; a modern politician trims his papers, or rather finds that it is no longer possible to trim them, and takes to trimming his own sails instead. It never occurs to him to ask what is the burden of the discourses of Henry Melvill or Mr. Binney; but he quietly endorses the mandate of *The Times*. The Covenanting ministers have been much blamed for their doings in Leslie's camp on Doon Hill before the battle of Dunbar; it is upon 'our own correspondents' that the wrath of all who dare to be angry on the subject is poured, when they look towards the Allied Camp of Sebastopol. The united and resolute demand of the London press, on certain subjects, no ministry can defy; we are not sure that any ministry could long defy, on an important question of general policy, the full power of *The Times*. The Good Regent leaned on Knox; Sir Robert Peel formally thanked Capt. Sterling for his leading articles. To one who reads

The Times carefully during the sitting of Parliament, it becomes almost startling to observe how parliamentary measures are suggested, decreed, or whiffed aside, by that remarkable power. It is one of our distinct political agencies, an unforeseen growth among British institutions, and very singularly supplementing our constitution. Nature and fact always outrun theory; a Times newspaper is too much for an Abbe Sièyes. And not only by direct political discussion do our newspapers and magazines govern us: they affect our whole mode of thought. Gradually springing out of our system of social life, they now overshadow it; and it would not, perhaps, be carrying the analogy too far to say, that in that gourd-shadow only stunted herbs and sickly flowers will grow. But we need not extend these remarks. The tendency in the public mind is not to underrate but to exaggerate the power of the press, and as all the information necessary to our discussion is patent to every reader, we are safe in assuming it in his possession as we proceed.

The broad view we have taken indicates that first impression, beyond which, we have said, there has yet been no progress. In general, the impression is, beyond question, correct. But does it exhaust the subject? The influence of the pulpit has receded from observation: has it ceased to act? There are certain facts which may lead us to hesitate before returning an answer in the affirmative. It is clear, to begin with, that the press has the lion's share of declaration and of declamation on the subject. It is heard perpetually; it alone speaks directly on political questions; and its tendency is decided to sneer at and underrate the intelligence and influence of the clergy. On questions of foreign policy, too, where Englishmen in general are peculiarly ignorant, and in all economic discussions, the influence of

the press is paramount. But a keen observer may have perceived, that there is a class of questions in connection with which that influence, as exerted on Parliament, very remarkably fails. These are questions which have more or less a religious character. We shall instance one or two, irresistibly suggestive of some other influence to counteract that of journalism.

The voice of the ruling portion of the London press is unanimous on the subject of the admission of the Jews to Parliament. The whole of that intellectual world specially represented by the press approves the measure. Yet it has been lost in the Houses, and will probably continue to be lost. Again, the ruling press of London demands, with importunate unanimity, that the British Museum and the picture galleries be thrown open to the public on Sundays. We do not think there is any probability that Parliament will accede to the demand. The opening of the Crystal Palace may be regarded as a separate question, and here, too, there is the like unanimity on the part of the press, with the like refusal on the part of Parliament. On the subject of education, the dominant London press may be said to have but one opinion. The theological distinctions which encumber the question are declared unworthy of discussion. They are made the subject of fierce and uncompromising derision. A system of national education is importunately demanded. When you enter Parliament, the scene is completely changed. The network, which before seemed of dew and cobwebs, to be brushed aside with careless facility, is converted into a fence of iron. Scheme after scheme is proposed; scheme after scheme is discussed; speeches are spoken by the stricken hour, day after day, week, perhaps, after week; honorable members draw upon their vital energies to the shortening of their invaluable

lives ; page after page is printed on broadsheet and in blue-book ; and the conclusion is—nothing ! Theological questions determine the issue. You are in a different atmosphere from that of the press.

What is the cause of all this ? We believe it is, that the indirect influence of the clergy is far more powerful than is believed. It pervades the vast middle class. It tells in elections. Not concerning itself with subjects of general politics or social economy, not consciously intermeddling, save in a very small and silent way, in any department of politics, it exercises a mighty and penetrating influence in what is perhaps the most natural, appropriate, and healthful manner. The great fact is unquestionable, that in the whole range of questions connected, directly or indirectly, with religion, the press speaks on one side, and Parliament votes on another. The fact must be accounted for ; and we are inclined to believe that the Radical journalist was, to a certain considerable extent, in the right as to fact, though in the spirit of his remark we do not in the least agree, when he declared, in reference to political action, that ‘the white chokers are choking us all.’ Of the relative influence of the pulpit on our general modes of thought, we do not yet speak.

We have found that the exclusive political influence which we are at times apt to attribute to the press, is by no means in its possession. In cases in which the influence of the Church admits of being exhibited—and we might have cited questions more distinctively ecclesiastical, in which ecclesiastical influence is still more direct—that influence is easily traceable. But may this not lead us further to a distinct limning out of the several spheres of the modern pulpit and the modern press? May we not have discovered a key, not only to the peculiarities of their respective political in-

fluence, but to their action upon our whole social life? Let it be remarked, that we institute a historical, not a philosophical inquiry. We do not ask, what are the legitimate provinces of religion and literature, of press and pulpit, as they might be fixed by theory, but what are the provinces which the course of events—the application of new mechanical agencies, and the unconstrained progress of the human mind—have assigned them?

As Christianity embodied in itself principles which searched more deeply into human nature than any system which ever acted upon the human mind, as it touched deeper affinities, and awoke more comprehensive elements of joint and several action, than had previously entered into civilization, so the Reformation brought these into more perfect development and wider action than had been witnessed in any previous century of the Christian era. It awoke to new energy forces which had been but partially engaged in working out the Reformation itself. As a rule which may be pronounced universal, revolutions were in former ages effected by conscious, intelligent, reasoning units, and by unconscious, unreasoning, merely consenting masses. It looks different in Greece and Rome, but was not in reality so: the freemen themselves were in those kingdoms a class. In certain countries, at the era of the Reformation, the people were enlightened and convinced by a gradual and spontaneous progress; but even in such instances the heads of the movement were the powers that be; and in countries which will occur to all, the Reformation was almost entirely a political revolution. But it was, humanly speaking, the last great intellectual revolution which can be so characterized. When it was completed three great fetters were for ever struck from the limbs of those nations which accepted it as the latest development of civilization. Slavery had been

previously destroyed in Europe; ecclesiastical infallibility was now discarded; and the monopoly of knowledge was doomed by the discovery of the printing-press. Modern history is the mad gambolling, or the free and graceful movement, of the nations from whose limbs these fetters fell away. Proclaiming loudly the doctrine of private judgment, the political theologians and theological politicians of the Reformation allied themselves with another power, whose epoch was inaugurated by the printing-press—the power of education. Education and the printing-press opened new fields of information and speculation to multitudes, who had never dreamed either of extensive information or original speculation. New departments of intellectual exertion required new intellectual laborers. May it not be, then, that it is not so much the contraction of the sphere of religious and clerical influence which marks the modern age, as the expansion of the whole province over which intellectual influence is exercised? May not all, or almost all, that is done by the newspaper, the magazine, and the volume, be *supplementary* to what was done of old time by the pulpit? May not the press and the pulpit be the types and representatives of perhaps the most grand and important of all the developments of the great modern principle of *division of labor*? May they not symbolize a separation between the distinctively moral and the distinctively intellectual provinces, paralleled in no previous age, but necessary to the consummation of human culture? To ask the question, is to receive its affirmative answer. It becomes perfectly evident to one who glances along the period of our modern development, that there has grown up a demand for knowledge which the pulpit cannot supply, and which, it does not seem unreasonable to say, it ought not to supply. A vast and powerful profession has arisen to meet the new demand.

It is in the natural course of events that press and pulpit have been severed, and, if we look fairly into the phenomenon, we may find that it is by no means a cause of lamentation.

They are nowise the deepest influences of which we are the most conscious. Unconscious influences, which emerge into consciousness only in the pain or dreariness of their discontinuance, are the most powerful. A child is not conscious of its mother's love. It is around him like mild sunshine pervading the atmosphere, coloring all things, but itself unseen. It smiles upon him in his sleep. It makes a little place of rest around him, in which every wind is tuned to melody. It is when it ceases that it is known. It is when the mother's smile of universal indulgence, of unconstrained, uncalled-for care, is taken from the face of the world, and stern, exacting, merciless demand is written in its every iron line, that the want is felt. The most powerful influences of nature are all of an unobserved, steady, gentle nature, realized most acutely in their cessation. So it is with light. So it is with dew. So it is with the gentle rain that droppeth from heaven. The healthful operations of nature are never spasmodic; a fact, by the way, which we commend to Professor Aytoun, as the strongest and most strictly scientific proof producible that the spasmodic school in poetry is a mistake. We imagine that the influence of religion, and, we scruple not to say, of the clergy, in our modern system of life, is somewhat of this sort. Sitting monotonously in your pew from Sunday to Sunday, hearing the same psalms or hymns sung, listening to sermons which have at least that characteristic of art, that they can be contemplated as wholes as soon as the exordium and first head are despatched, and having texts repeated in your ear with which you are not only perfectly familiar, but which

constantly recur from Sabbath to Sabbath, you are apt to conclude that your mind is altogether unaffected, and that a total cessation of attendance would occasion no change whatever in your prevailing moods and opinions. But experience of a foreign land, where there was no weekly worship, might work a change in your impressions. The Sabbath bell has a sacredness and a charm when heard across the sea. You might perceive a something stealing over the mind difficult to define, but marking a real and by no means auspicious change; a certain spiritual dryness; a comparative absence of reverence and child-like looking of the soul towards Heaven; an infrequency of scriptural associations and imagery; a discontinuance of that mental condition which belongs to the state in which life is a prayer and work indeed worship. We do not here speak at hap-hazard; we believe that we mention a fact. And we cannot doubt that an influence of the nature we have indicated, very largely pervades British society. Nay, we are inclined to think that, however unseen, this influence does more really to mould the national character, and has a more powerful hold upon the public mind, than that of the press. The modern church may be different from the old cathedral. The solemnity of Gothic pillars and dim-lit lofty isles may be wanting. But merely to look upon the faces of a congregation met on that business so inseparably associated with man in all ages—to worship God—merely to do homage weekly to the Most High—this must send earnest influences into the recesses of the soul.

May it not have been in the essence of Protestantism thus to separate, and we may hope, spiritualize, the clerical influence? The religion which Paul preached was to change institutions from within. It freed the slave, yet it left on him his bodily fetters. It encouraged no rebellion to the

ruling powers, but it breathed a spirit into civilization which was to cause it to arise on new pinions, leaving its old form to moulder in the dust. We think this consideration sufficient to impose at least a caution upon those who rashly exclaim that the clergy ought to strive to regain an influence, which it is by no means proved they have lost, by preaching upon the characteristics of the age, having recourse to fresh stores of scientific imagery, and so on. Such general declarations we always hold conclusive evidence that the speaker has regarded the subject only in that broad, unreflecting way so characteristic of a journalistic age. It is of course the duty of the Christian clergy to apply Christianity to every new want and development of the age; to show how the imperishable spirit can enter into all forms, and animate all agencies. It is its duty, too, as it is that of every body of men, to watch with reverence and joy the unveiling of the august brow of Nature by the hand of science, and to be ready to call mankind to a worship ever new. But the day which witnesses the conversion of our ministers into political or philosophical speculators, or scientific lecturers, will witness the final decay of clerical weight and influence. The developing powers of civilization have relieved the clergy of certain functions, put these into different hands, and remitted them to purely pastoral work; are we to make these circumstances positive arguments why they should merge the specialties of their office in a score of vapid, indefinite, and, perhaps, ephemeral novelties?

It may be worth while to look this great result of Protestantism fairly in the face. It brings us, if we mistake not, into the neighborhood of truths of the very highest importance, available for the destruction of errors which exercise a subtle and pernicious influence on our national life. Is there not a rightness, a propriety, a consistence at once

with nature and Christianity, in encircling the clerical profession with an exclusive spirituality, in defining its functions as more strictly pertaining to the Sabbath, and, while narrowing the sphere of formal worship, in extending the sphere of a worship as truly real and Christian as formal worship, over that whole field of life which the New Testament seems to point to its embracing? "The hour cometh," said our Saviour to the woman of Samaria, "and now is, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father." "Whether therefore ye eat," says the apostle Paul, "or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." And again, "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him." Has the Christian world yet really possessed itself of the significance of such words as these? Has it fully appreciated the fact that Christianity is a consecration *of* life, not of times, seasons, and places, *in* life? Has it fully apprehended the scope and effect of that transmutation, by which, when steeped in the light of Christian devotion, all the natural operations of the human brain and hand cease to be common and unclean? To go to church every day, there to offer up prayers to a God more propitious than elsewhere, to have places of worship always standing open, that the passer by may turn aside to worship, to have days of religious holiday scattered over the year, — all this has a look of sanctity and religion, which prevails greatly with excitable young persons, with Puseyite weaklings, and the like. But the spirit of true Christianity, of true and robust Protestantism, is the breath of a stronger life than this. It does not call the mechanic to the church: but it makes the workshop a temple. It hallows the duties of the six days, and makes all true work worship. Over the husbandman in the field, over the miner in the pit, over

the sailor on the ocean, it spreads the canopy of one wide temple-roof. The week-day psalm is the immeasurable hum of labor, the ringing of a thousand hammers, the roar of a thousand engines. The week-day prayer is the earnestness with which a man bends to his work, feeling himself God's workman, and looking up for his blessing. And the grand division of labor which we have discovered has marked off a clergy for the week-day. The literary class is the priesthood of the laboring days. It is their function to aid, so far as is necessary by speech, the general work. It is their function further, to bring out in full and vigorous action all those powers of intellect, imagination, sensibility, which expatiate in the fields of science, philosophy, and poetry, whose direct operation is distinct both from conscience and the devotional faculty, but which are of God's appointment, and in their natural development as beautiful and sinless as the trees of the forest and the lilies of the field. To minister to these powers truly and well, to be led aside by no sinful and debasing selfishness, to write and speak as God's servants, are the duties of the week-day clergy. The duties of the Sabbath clergy are as well-defined as theirs, in correspondence with the general distinction between the week-day duties and the Sabbath duties. In the one case, there is the worship of labor; in the other case, the worship of rest. We cannot here enter upon any proof or discussion with regard to the duty of Sabbath-keeping. We must suppose readers to agree with what is our profound conviction, that, were the Bible not once consulted on the subject, the natural and unbiassed heart and conscience, collaterally assisted by the physical and mental powers, would urge upon man one day in the seven of worshipping rest. The man or nation has fallen from a normal and a felicitous condition, which does not weekly lay down the instruments of physi-

cal and intellectual toil, and permit the purely devotional part of human nature to arise towards God. To aid men in this worship of rest is the business of the clergy, distinctively so called. They guide in the worship of rest, in that Sabbath worship, strictly a type of the celestial, in which labor is suspended. To confound the functions of the two orders of clergy is an important error. The sermon must not be a leading article, or lecture: the leading article or treatise must not be a sermon. The sermon is adapted to that state of mind in which worship is the work: the leading article to that state of mind in which work is worship. Whatever is bad in its kind is unchristian: nothing that is good in its kind, and remains in its place, is profane. The distinction between profane and religious literature is false and pernicious. No moral tagged on to the end or inscribed on every page will make a slovenly treatment of a scientific or historical subject Christian: no absence of direct reference to religion can make a thorough treatment of natural truth profane.

It cannot be too often repeated that there is, in the actual world, no such thing as a mathematical line. We do not pretend to lay down with geometrical exactness the line between the clerical and literary classes, between the duties and functions of the Sabbath and those of the week-day. But we are convinced that the principle we have indicated, that of the comparative severance between spiritual and intellectual truth, is one of vital importance to an intelligence of the modern epoch. And it would be to the advantage both of the press and the pulpit that there was a better understanding as to their respective spheres and functions. Meanwhile we turn again to the ecclesiastical clergy.

It is not demanding too much in favor of the body of these men to say, that, apart from their strictly professional

labors, they exercise, from their position, a moral influence upon the community of a nature on the whole benign. It is difficult, in this relation, to speak of the Churches of Scotland and of England indiscriminately. We do not by any means assail even the relative morality and godliness of the English clergy. But, excluding the Dissenters, there are circumstances which render it difficult, from the complication of questions entering into the consideration, to form a judgment beforehand of the probable standard of morality among the English clergy. On the one hand, there are higher prizes in the English Church than are held out by any ecclesiastical body in Scotland; on the other, there is a possibility, if not a probability, of drudgery and poverty, and there are circumstances of favoritism, to be contemplated by one entering the English Establishment, which do not present themselves to the aspirant to the ministry in any Scottish denomination. Striking the average over the island, we think it must be conceded that, in the vast majority of cases, the incitements of ambition, and the desire of wealth, would urge young men to look towards some other profession rather than the Church. It is a supposition, not only warranted by all human charity, but urged upon us by the facts of the case, that the large majority of young men entering the ministry are drawn towards it by noble and lofty motives—by a certain revolt of the celestial principle within from the materialism and mammonism of our age—by a felt affinity with works of benignity and advancement—by an experienced power to find a life-occupation and a life-enjoyment apart from the common aims and vulgar ambitions of the world. This *a priori* consideration is strengthened by regarding the average character of our clergy. With the most perfect deliberation we express the conviction, that the Christian ministry of the British Isles

is at present, on the whole, a glory and a blessing to the land. They have their shortcomings, and there are exceptions; but there is enough left to justify our assertion. Somewhat to our surprise, we have lit upon a most gratifying confirmation of our words in one of the books of Mr. Thackeray, a man who is fearless not only in attacking the bad, but also, what is now, perhaps, still more difficult and dangerous, in acknowledging the good. Mr. Thackeray writes as follows:—“And I know this, that if there are some clerics who do wrong, there are straightway a thousand newspapers to haul up those unfortunates, and cry, Fie upon them, fie upon them! while, though the press is always ready to yell and bellow excommunication against these stray delinquent parsons, it somehow takes very little count of the good ones—of the tens of thousands of honest men who lead Christian lives, who give to the poor generously, who deny themselves rigidly, and live and die in their duty, without ever a newspaper paragraph in their favor. My beloved friend and reader, I wish you and I could do the same; and let me whisper my belief, *entre nous*, that, of those eminent philosophers who cry out against parsons the loudest, there are not many who have got their knowledge of the church by going thither often. But you who have ever listened to village bells, or have walked to church as children on sunny Sabbath mornings; you who have ever seen the parson’s wife tending the sick man’s bedside, or the town clergyman threading the dirty stairs of noxious alleys upon his sacred business, do not raise a shout when one of these falls away, or yell with the mob that howls after him.”

This is as appropriate and consistent with fact as it is generous. The yell of triumph emitted by the London press when anything seems to cast discredit on the clergy—as

on the late occasion of Archdeacon Sinclair's charge—is peculiarly offensive, and not less peculiarly absurd. If the clergy are affected with a most objectionable theological nervousness, and do at times, in their public appearances, justify the charge of wordiness, we should think no journalist in the kingdom, with a spark of common honesty in his composition, would stand to a denial that the morality of the press is incomparably inferior to that of the pulpit. The subject is one on which we could expatiate indefinitely, but it is quite unnecessary. It is matter of common notoriety that journalism has become almost universally a trade, and that the most earnest, perhaps the only hopeful, exhortation one would address to journalists, is, that they should conduct their trade on the safest *commercial* principle, and stick to honesty as the best *policy*. The dishonest recklessness occasionally exhibited in the London press gives rise to really startling reflections.

Since we have partially contrasted the professions of which we treat, in a moral point of view, we may contrast them briefly as spheres of talent. We find the expression of a very general idea on this subject in the last number of the "Westminster Review;"—"Given a man with moderate intellect, a moral standard not higher than the average, some rhetorical affluence and great glibness of speech, what is the career in which, without the aid of birth or money, he may most easily attain power and reputation in English society? Where is that Goshen of mediocrity in which a smattering of science and learning will pass for profound instruction, where platitudes will be accepted as wisdom, bigoted narrowness as holy zeal, unctuous egotism as God-given piety? Let such a man become an evangelical preacher, he will then find it possible to reconcile small ability with great ambition, superficial knowledge with the

prestige of erudition, a middling *morale* with a high reputation for sanctity. Let him shun practical extremes, and be ultra only in what is purely theoretic; let him be stringent on predestination, but latitudinarian on fasting; unflinching in insisting on the eternity of punishment, but diffident of curtailing the substantial comforts of time; ardent and imaginative on the pre-millennial advent of Christ, but cold and cautious towards every other infringement of the *status quo*. Let him fish for souls, not with the bait of inconvenient singularity, but with the drag-net of comfortable conformity. Let him be hard and literal in his interpretation only when he wants to hurl texts at the heads of unbelievers and adversaries, but when the letter of the Scriptures presses too closely on the genteel Christianity of the nineteenth century, let him use his spiritualizing alembic, and disperse it into thin ether. Let him preach less of Christ than of Anti-christ; let him be less definite in showing what sin is, than in showing who is the man of sin; less expansive on the blessedness of faith, than on the accursedness of infidelity. Above all, let him set up as an interpreter of prophecy, and rival 'Moore's Almanack' in the prediction of political events, tickling the interest of hearers who are but moderately spiritual, by showing how the Holy Spirit has dictated problems and charades for their benefit, and how, if they are ingenious enough to solve these, they may have their Christian graces nourished by learning precisely to whom they may point as the "horn that had eyes," "the lying prophet," and the "unclean spirits." In this way he will draw men to him by the strong cords of their passions, made reason-proof by being baptized with the name of piety. In this way he may gain a metropolitan pulpit; the avenues to his church will be as crowded as the passages to the opera; he has but to print

his prophetic sermons, and bind them in lilac and gold, and they will adorn the drawing-room table of all evangelical ladies, who will regard as a sort of pious "light reading" the demonstration that the prophecy of the locusts, whose sting is in their tail, is fulfilled in the fact of the Turkish commander having taken a horse's tail for his standard, and that the French are the very frogs predicted in the *Revelations*.

'Pleasant, to the clerical flesh, under such circumstances, is the arrival of Sunday! Somewhat at a disadvantage during the week, in the presence of working-day interests and lay splendors, on Sunday the preacher becomes the cynosure of a thousand eyes, and predominates at once over the amphitheatre with whom he dines, and the most captious member of his church or vestry. He has an immense advantage over all other public speakers. The platform orator is subject to the criticism of hisses and groans. Counsel for the plaintiff expects the retort of counsel for the defendant. The honorable gentleman on one side of the House is liable to have his facts and figures shown up by his honorable friend on the opposite side. Even the scientific or literary lecturer, if he is dull or incompetent, may see the best part of his audience slip out one by one. But the preacher is completely master of the situation—no one may hiss, no one may depart. Like the writer of imaginary conversations, he may put what imbecilities he pleases into the mouths of his antagonists, and swell with triumph when he has refuted them. He may riot in gratuitous assertions, confident that no man will contradict him; he may exercise perfect free will in logic, and invent illustrative experience; he may give an evangelical edition of history, with the inconvenient facts omitted. All this he may do with impunity, certain that those of his hearers who are not sympathizing

are not listening. For the press has no band of critics who go the round of the churches and chapels, and are on the watch for a slip or defect in the preacher, to make a "feature" in their article. The clergy are, practically, the most irresponsible of all talkers. For this reason, at least, it is well that they do not always allow their discourses to be merely figurative, but are often induced to fix them in that black and white, in which they are open to the criticism of any man who has the courage and patience to treat them with thorough freedom of speech and pen.<sup>2</sup>

We do not deny that there are touches of truth here; perhaps, as the daguerreotype of the particular minister whom the writer had in view, the description has certain points of accuracy and suggestion. But, as a fair representation of the talents, requirements, and difficulties of the popular preacher, it is grossly and palpably at fault. Pass from the particular to the general, and it is at once seen to fail. The methods by which the depicted personage is so easily to secure popularity, are not an altogether unfair representation of Dr. Cumming's general manner; but it is Dr. Cumming's manner alone; we cannot recall a single instance of similar methods having been similarly successful. The other two points, besides dealing in prophetic lore, which can be particularized in this description of the popular preacher, are the general assumption of glib mediocrity, and the assertion of public irresponsibility. We can adduce a fact or two which cut the theory, in both respects, across, as with a seythe. First of all, it is a fact for which we can vouch our own experience, and for which we appeal fearlessly to those who are acquainted with the state of, at least, our Scottish Universities, that a very large proportion of the highest talent in the college class passes into the Church. We do not refer to the mere plodders, to the slow, sure, unimpassioned

followers of the steps of their fathers, who are removed equally from blunder and brilliancy, but to the really superior fellows, those who are beyond question the most substantially and symmetrically gifted, who display a fine, glad recipiency for every kind of culture, and are devoid neither of character nor of originality. Of these we assert that a very large proportion out of all our college classes enter the ministry. Whatever, therefore, may be the effect of the clerical profession on ability, it cannot be asserted that it does not set out with its full share of the youthful talent of the country. We shall grant that, in this respect, there may be a decided difference between England and Scotland. That fatal influence, which, wherever it comes, eats out excellence like a canker; that pernicious principle, which is a practical infraction of God's laws, to the extent of impiety and blasphemy; that formula, by which there is a local habitation, a name, and a certain consecration given to what nature, in her effort towards perfection, sets herself, specially and universally, to combat; that legalized injustice to the individual and the nation, by which the one is crushed below the level to which inborn and most sacred impulses compel him to aspire, and the other deprived of that inheritance of talent which God alone can give, and which is the most princely of his earthly gifts, — favoritism, casts its shadow over the English Church. But it cannot be doubted that even this evil, precious as the talent is which it must turn aside from the Church, does not altogether avert ability. Let any one, who imagines that it does, read the life of Arnold, and consider who were his class-fellows at Corpus. But, next, let us see how the reviewer's pleasant little theory will consist with the success in general attained in the clerical profession. If so shabby an outfit of ability is needful as that of which he favors us with a catalogue, it is abundantly clear that pop-

ular preachers must be plentiful. Taking one thing with another, no test of the talent required in any profession is more reliable than the relative number of those who win its prizes; and, in the same general view, no test of real talent is superior to that of legitimate and noble success in life. It is superior even to the competition in an University class. Every psychologist knows that, however true to their peculiar standard, and however valuable in practice, all the schemes by which the human mind is mapped into express faculties and emotions, are incomplete, and may be fallacious. In accordance with such schemes, every system of academic education must be framed. The consequence is that, though on the whole accurate in fixing the relative talent of those whose intellectual culture they subserve, they cannot be deemed infallible. In the individual case, there may be a balance of faculties too subtle for any analysis generally applicable. There may be some lurking capacity or aptitude which has been brought into no psychological category. There may be some new and delicate mental coloring which meets all attempts at classification with the defiance of genius. But nature is true to herself; she will recognize her own most cunning workmanship; and therefore it is, that in the general commerce of life, in the struggles for professional preferment, in the natural outgoing of feeling and faculty in congenial action, there may be displayed or developed capacity to convince or sympathy to draw, whose existence had been indicated by no previous test. Now, whatever may be the cause, success in preaching, as tested by popularity, is at least as rare as success in any of the learned professions. There are, in round numbers, twenty thousand preachers in this island. Of these it may, on the whole, be said that they desire popularity; not by any means for its own sake, or known by that name, but as a necessary form of evi-

dence that their ministrations are impressive. In Scotland, as every one is aware, there is abroad among the clergy an earnest spirit of emulation and noble ambition; they strive with all their energy to excel; and among the junior clergy of England, the same fact must, despite all hindrances, hold good. Yet, how many of our clergy attain even a local celebrity? How many of them attain a national reputation? To the first question, we shall answer, Not so much as ten per cent.; to the second, Not so much as five. We found that the clerical body secured to the full its share of the nation's talent. We now find that, when this talent is applied to its peculiar work, applied with determined energy and desire to succeed, it is only, at the utmost, in five cases out of a hundred that success is attained. How is this? It can be accounted for only by supposing that pulpit popularity is not so easy to secure as our reviewer imagines. Call it what you like—tact, fancy, feeling, fluency—the popular preacher must possess some quality which is uncommon. Men of acknowledged talent have egregiously failed as preachers. Foster desired earnestly to succeed, strove resolutely, and emptied his chapels thoroughly. Arnold would have valued pulpit acceptability very much, but he never, to any extent worth remark, obtained it. We could point to men in our own day of powerful logical faculty, of vast knowledge, of unquestioned piety, who have never, though they would conscientiously have prized it, reached popularity. We would advise the reviewer to make the experiment on his own behalf. Let him try to become a popular preacher. He may find it not so easy to make the egg stand on end.

Our own impression is, that a universal mediocrity of character is precisely what never succeeds in the pulpit. Dull uniformity, however proper and orthodox, has not a

chance. It is rather some conspicuous quality in which a particular man is different from all others, that attracts attention ; and even this must be of a peculiar nature. The result of mature consideration has with us been, that we can neither explain the phenomenon of popularity, nor lay down rules for its attainment. The preacher, too, is born. Like the poet, he may have a feeble logical faculty ; like the poet, he may abhor the investigation of evidence, the details of fact, the study of statistics ; but, like the poet, he must possess some indefinable gift, by virtue of which men flock round him and love to listen.

A valuable light is cast upon this subject, as we pass on to consider that other assertion of the Westminster critic as to the irresponsibility of the pulpit orator. Counsel replies to counsel, honorable gentlemen upset the arguments of honorable gentlemen, but there is no voice or answer as the honey-dew of pulpit oratory falls upon the congregation. The preacher, is, therefore, shall we conclude, irresponsible ? Of course. Precisely as the newspaper editor is irresponsible, who pens his articles without even the criticism of listless eyes and nodding heads. Precisely as the Westminster writer is irresponsible, when he sends his manuscript by post to his literary liege lord or corrects the proof when it is to come before the public eye. Strange to relate, the irresponsible editor writes as if a responsibility lay upon him ; he fancies he beholds the eye of the indulgent reader — the most merciless of human existences — following his pen. Singular to consider, the Westminster author writes in the lively consciousness of the fact, that if the public dislike his lucubrations, his wary superior will indicate, in terms of oppressive compliment, that the article, or articles, must be discontinued. Might not one who enlightens the world on so large a scale as our clever friend, have hit upon the pro-

found observation that, in order to be popular, a man must be liked? Byron thought that Roberts must have known from the sale of his review that there could be no very extensive selling without buying. The Westminster writer would have puzzled him with his popularity without preference. As a rule, men prefer dozing on the sofa to dozing in church; where there is much sleeping, there will soon be vacant pews. The fact of the matter is obvious, and to overlook it is to practise a singular *legerdemain* upon one's self. The hiss is unnecessary in the church; audible criticism is quite superfluous; a respondent might often be a valuable assistant in keeping up interest. The cessation of the steady, clear, piercing, united gleam of a thousand eyes is sufficient; the restlessness and indifference of the congregation announce the departure of popularity as certainly as the most fierce outcry of a public assembly. And has the reviewer fairly considered all that the popular preacher has to do, all with which he has to contend? The advocate, the honorable gentleman, and the speaker on a public platform—particular difficulties as unquestionably lie in their several ways—have all one great advantage. Their subject is new, its interest is fresh. But the preacher discourses on themes with which his audience have been familiar from infancy. Whatever expectation hangs upon his words has peculiar reference to himself; a new truth is not looked for, but he is expected to set some old truth in a new light; he has to create an interest, and sustain it from week to week, though his doctrinal beliefs are marked by no novelty, and the sources of almost all his imagery have been drawn upon a thousand times. If he becomes monotonous, if he fails in animation, if he is too shallow or too profound, too exclusively commonplace or too erudite, too barely logical or too loosely rhetorical, his popularity is sure to decay. Dr.

Cumming is, we have said, an individual and peculiar instance ; his style of preaching is his own ; it is a style which hardly exists in Scotland, the land of preaching, and which certainly leads to no popularity in North Britain. To preaching in general all we have said applies.

Our observations have unconsciously assumed an apologetic tone. We have had to clear away a certain amount of rubbish before proceeding on our way. We must now somewhat alter the tenor of our remarks. It cannot, we think, be denied that there are grounds for the prevailing idea, that the clerical intellect lacks the clearness and logical power pertaining to the advocate or journalist. Be he what he may in his own sphere, a minister makes a bad platform speaker and a bad book-writer. A reporter will tell you that clerical speeches admit of remarkable condensation, and if the books produced by acceptable preachers within the last thirty years were collected, they would form a pile of confusion, commonplace, and verbosity worthy to enthrone a modern goddess of dulness. In the case even of preachers of commanding genius, the general literary inability remains. Dr. Chalmers was a man of such genius. His original endowment was, we are assured, one of the noblest to be met with in these latter ages. In the pulpit he was irresistible. He gave an impulse to the moral and intellectual life of Scotland. His books are valuable, and may live long. They are great masses of truth and fervor. But, as we peruse them, the feeling that their author was a preacher at all times, and a preacher only, is perpetually present ; we long for the calm tracking of ideas which we expect in a book ; we want the deliberate meeting of objections, the accurate observance of plan, the gradual evolution of the argumentative chain, which ought to characterize a production intended for a world-wide audience and a lasting

fame. Butler could not preach like Chalmers, but what a different author is Chalmers from Butler! The Scottish preacher could never divest himself of the consciousness of his congregation, and books which are magnificently-expanded sermons must be denied the approval of art.

We cannot ignore the phenomenon we have been considering. In business-like dealing with facts, in logical acuteness, the clerical body seems beyond question deficient. The reason is easily perceived, and nowise compels a conclusion generally unfavorable to the intellectual capacities of the clergy. It may be, that the clerical profession furnishes a more *complete* practical culture for the mind, while law and journalism foster *particular* faculties. Two young men of equal capacity part company after quitting college, the one becoming an advocate, the other a clergyman. For ten years they follow their professions. The lawyer has acquired the eye of a lynx; he can untie the most intricate knots; he can think out a whole train of argument from the trace of a foot on the sand. But his soul is clear, cold, passionless; it cuts like a razor, but suggests that the final end of the human mind is to have a razor's edge. The clergyman has fallen far behind his classfellow in argumentative skill. His mind has been engaged in spreading, dilating, representing, attiring ideas, not in grappling with new facts, and searching, with swift urgency, for the links of that harness by which they can be yoked to a conclusion. He has been in the habit of addressing himself to the emotions as well as the pure intellect. He has made it his business to bring to act upon men those subtle but potent influences, which it is useless, if not impossible, to attempt to reduce under logical formula; influences of reverence, of admiration, of love, of the contemplation of moral excellence; and familiarity with such influences, both as

preacher and pastor, is to him that culture which perpetual consideration of facts in their logical relations is to the lawyer. The journalist occupies a middle position between advocate and preacher. He dare not be so diffuse as the pulpit orator; he must not be so barely argumentative as the special pleader. His mind is furnished with a perpetual gymnastic in discussing the endless succession of new events. He must generalize with speed, he must arrange with clearness, he must accustom his memory to carry facts. His teaching function is now extremely limited; Mr. Cobden used to think it ought to be dispensed with altogether. In a platform speech, in a discussion relative to business matters, he will be more curt, clear, and pointed, than the clergyman. But we may well doubt whether his profession is so noble a culture as that of the latter. It is remarkable, by the way, that men who have failed signally as preachers have notoriously succeeded as journalists, while we are not aware of the case having been reversed.

In one respect, however, the circumstances of the journalist are more favorable to mental health than those which encircle the clergyman. The preacher may be keenly alive to all that is necessary to maintain him in his popularity; but he is under great temptations to mistake the meaning and limits of that popularity. In no position in the world is there so great an aptness to confound the voice of a few with the judgment of mankind, the partial applause of a generation with the admiration of posterity. We are so much the creatures of influence, consciously or unconsciously, that there is no man who values intellectual health, and does not care for sugar in the mouth, but will desire to work in secret, and to know as little as may be of his celebrity. Mankind, besides, is, on the whole, savagely exacting; there can be no doubt of it; and as it is well always to

know under what adamantine conditions we work, it is perilous to have the world's criticism tempered by the indulgence of a congregation. The popular minister is surrounded by an atmosphere artificially heated; his cheek is apt to flush unhealthily, his joints to relax. And on the instant when he steps into the arena of literature, the authoritative tone of his office, which has become habitual in his canonicals, is an argument against him. One would think it possible, however, at least partially, to counteract those influences. A minister who has formed a complete idea of the action of his functions on his mind, and who knows accurately his position in relation to his fellow-men, may attain a very noble character. The legal mind is clear as crystal or as ice; it thinks and writes in uncial characters. The journalist is sharp, but may be hard, and has no time for reflection. In the clerical character there may be both stem and foliage.

We are accustomed to hear nothing but laudation of the influence of the press on the public mind. Yet it is only in its exterior and obvious action that it has yet been considered. We are well assured that careful reflection will reveal to every thinking man certain perilous circumstances which attend it. Let not the foolish mistake be made, of supposing that we in any sense or measure assail the press. Such a procedure is out of the question. But by looking into it, by knowing it well in its advantages and dangers, we best learn to appreciate and use it. Might not a somewhat cynical admirer of the good old times inquire, whether, in order to the efficient transaction of the world's business, it is after all necessary that every person know what every other person is about? In former days, action proceeded quietly; every day's events now produce an immeasurable hubbub of talk. To compare great things with small, the drowsy roll of the old stage-coach is exchanged for the roar

of the railway train. The maxim about minding one's own business is obsolete. A man is now behind his age if he does not mind the business of the King of Siam. Looked at in a planetary point of view, the earth has become something of a chatterbox in her old age; she is no longer content with her daily achievement of work; the universal press may be considered the tongue with which she proclaims it through the solar system. It is more than questionable whether the vast multiplicity of the matters brought by the press before the mind does not distract as well as teach. It can hardly be considered questionable at all, that it tends to destroy reflection. One sometimes fears that men at present forget the end of knowledge in its quantity, and do not think of its quality at all. In a remarkably interesting and suggestive German book, by L. Bucher, published in Berlin in 1855, we have met with one or two ideas on this subject as true as they are trenchant. The author considers the daily press of England fitted to blunt the memory and deaden thought. "The custom," he says, "of enjoying each day's spiritual nourishment on a dish of the same size, and, if possible, in the same quantity, renders the memory waste and the judgment dull." With a keen eye, he detects evidence of this in the fact that our journals now experience extreme difficulty in devising methods to impress the weightier matters on the attention of their readers. All resource in diction and style has failed to fix the eye as it glances over the wavering sea of words: and italics, large letters, and lines far apart, express the difficulty. The truth of this we must acknowledge. By gazing perpetually upon the pageantry of the world-drama, our eyes become insensible to its splendors. We resemble men who work in a yard where iron vessels are built; the perpetual hammering causes deafness to the ordinary tones of the human voice. And,

what is singular enough, our standard specific at present for the cure of this deafness is the introduction of new hammerers! Go over the whole range of the human faculties, and you will find that the haste, multitude, and tumult of interests which occupy the modern mind, are perilous to their most lofty and noble action. The oak may buffet with an occasional tempest, and strike its roots the deeper, but it grows in calm.

We found the Reformation to have heralded the great modern division of labor between press and pulpit. In all directions, this principle of division is now carried out. The result has been an unprecedented advance by the species. But Sir William Hamilton has reminded us that "the cultivation of the individual is not to be rashly confounded with the progress of the species." Tennyson long since pointed to the advancement of the world and the withering of the individual; and other high thinkers have of late discerned a danger to completeness, symmetry, and freedom of character, from the extreme division of labor. Now, perhaps, more than ever, the wise man would choose the part of Pythagoras at Samos, would pass from the crowd, and develop his mind symmetrically by making a synthesis of knowledge. At all events, it must become certain to every reflecting mind, that, for a healthful development of the whole character, there is required some calming influence to overarch, like a sky, the din of this ceaseless journalistic commotion. The rest of religion is more than ever precious and necessary. If the Church stepped boldly forward, casting aside even apparent nervousness at the facts of science, and endeavoring to improve in many respects the culture of her candidates for the office of the ministry, her mission might be illustrated instead of obscured by her separation from the press.

Of all the symptoms which might be collected of a dis-tempered restlessness, a febrile, joyless excitement, as characterizing large classes of London society in the present day, none could be more expressive or more mournful, than the way in which the great body of the newspapers uniformly refer to public worship. The one broad, bold, undisguised idea entertained and expressed of it by them is, that it is a thing of dreariness and gloom. Truly, from whatever cause, the Sabbath has become a weariness to all that is represented by the leading journals of London. The feeling takes various forms of manifestation. Now it is that of contemptuous assertion of the dulness, the ignorance, the inefficiency, of the clergy. Now it is that of indignant appeal against the refusal of the British nation, as represented in Parliament, to sanction a Parisian Sabbath, and provide, on that day, public amusements for the populace ; who, it is piteously reiterated, must be driven to the gin-palace, since the dingy and wearisome church can present no attractions. Often it is that of entreaty to the clergymen to be more scientific, or philosophic, or literary, in one word, and, in whatsoever way, interesting. Now we leave totally out of sight the question of the abilities, earnestness, or piety, of the metropolitan clergy. But is it not melancholy, is it not ghastly and appalling, that it could be in the *power* of men to blind altogether the eyes of their fellows to the blessedness of merely worshipping God ? Might not one weep to think that, among multitudes of men in this century,—men of genius, of culture, the rulers of the age—there cannot arise the very idea of a portion of the human life, in which selfish entertainment is not at all contemplated, in which the question is not of being interested or uninterested, but in which man stands amidst his fellows, and uncovers his head before his God ? Surely if in former times

men sought, from week to week, the hallowing influences of worship, never were they so required as now. When one listens to the central roar of London; when one paces our hurrying quays; when one enters an Exchange in any of our great cities; when one watches by night the tongues of flame licking upwards through the darkness, the clouds, for leagues on leagues, touched with a sombre but sublime illumination, in our manufacturing districts; when, in any way, one catches, so to speak, the bloodshot eye, or feels the fevered pulse, of the nineteenth century; can he resist the feeling that now, of all ages, there is most need of intervals of silence and repose, of seasons of reflection and worship, of times when the mind is laid open to the influences of divine contemplation, and the earth is forgotten and the soul seeks to envelop itself in the calmness of heaven? The sky must be clear of clouds, before the stars can be seen or the dews can fall. The ambitions and interests of earth must be swept from the mind, before the heavenly influences can descend to reinvigorate or refresh. What man can say that his Sabbath practice approaches the ideal of a Christian Sabbath; but surely the *rationale* of the Sabbath and of worship is not difficult to find.

## X I.

### THE TESTIMONY OF THE ROCKS:

#### A DEFENCE.\*

THOSE of our readers who have made themselves acquainted with an article entitled "Genesis and Science," which appeared in the fifty-fourth number of the *North British Review*, will perceive without surprise that we have deemed it our duty to make that article the subject of particular comment.

\* This article was written and published in successive numbers of the *Edinburgh Witness* after the present volume was mostly in type. It did not therefore originally enter into the plan of the work, and it may strike the reader as not being entirely in harmony with the other contents. But the marked ability displayed in the discussion, and the great interest which the subject is now exciting in this country, together with the author's sanction, have induced the publishers to give the essay a place in this volume. In its original form it excited so much attention in Scotland that a pamphlet edition was called for, and in a prefatory note to that edition Mr. Bayne proceeds to remark as follows :

"The author does not profess to be a geologist in any sense implying that he has made Geology his exclusive or his principal study. He has devoted to it a considerable measure of attention, and believes that he has made himself master of its main lines of argument and of its general scheme. But he claims only to represent that large class of men, of University education, who, feeling themselves personally concerned with those questions at issue between geologists and theologians, have made it a duty to acquire sufficient geological knowledge to enable them to follow and appreciate argument on the subject. Science must abdicate all claim to an influence at once general and rational, if none but professional men of science can deal with its logic."

If there is anything strictly new in the following pages, it is the definite statement of the *method* attributed, in the Age theory of reconciliation between Scripture and Geology to the Mosaic record. Although this has been implied in many works, the writer has not seen it expressly stated.

He is particularly anxious to have it understood that, however dangerous he may consider the tendencies and effects of a certain system of Mosaic Geology, he reflects upon the sincerity the Christianity, or the liberality of no man and no Church in still maintaining it. His own sincerity must excuse any emphasis which he may use in warning against perils which he cannot help perceiving."

We are anxious to make it clear at the outset for what reasons and with what aims we address ourselves to this subject. Neither with the *North British Review* nor with the writer of this article have we, on account of the way in which Mr. Hugh Miller is alluded to by the latter, strictly speaking, any ground of quarrel. What exception we take is to the opinions expressed, and has no reference to the mode of expressing them. The reviewer pays a becoming tribute to the genius and worth of Mr. Miller; and the *Witness* would poorly represent the principles of feeling and action bequeathed to it, by its great founder, if it discovered in manly, plain-spoken, argumentative opposition, anything fitted to compromise dispositions of friendliness. In perfect consistence, however, with friendliness of disposition towards Mr. Miller, it was possible for the writer of the article before us to do him abstract injustice, and, while so doing, to deal unintentional blows at truth itself. And this, in our view, represents the actual state of the case.

Injustice is here done, first, to Mr. Miller. It was the highest ambition of his life to serve his God and his country, and the principal way in which he hoped to do so was by applying his geological knowledge to the defence of holy Scripture against infidel assaults masked by science. It was not as a geologist, it was not as a logician, it was not as a literary composer, that Hugh Miller aimed principally at distinction. The deepest vein in his nature was his Christianity; and it was as a Christian that his loftiest aspiration displayed itself. To have told Hugh Miller that he had yielded a hair's breadth of the defences of Bible Christianity, would have been to have told him that he had shed extinguishing drops on the altar-fire which warmed and lit the inmost shrine of his own existence. "It is done," he said, referring to *The Testimony of the Rocks*, on the last day of his life, just before the nervous organization

finally rebelled against that tyrant soul which had made it serve too well,— “It is done.” He spoke the words, not in vain exultation, but with the serene and noble satisfaction of one whose work was finished, and who in that already saw a reward greater than any which man could bestow upon him. And what was the work which he believed he had completed? He believed that he had taken the torch of science out of the hand of the infidel, and set it to burn in the temple of the Lord; he believed that he had exhibited, more plainly than had previously been done, the harmony and accordance between the word and the works of God; he believed that he had pushed that great enterprise which had been begun by Chalmers, whom of all men he most gratefully named his father on earth, further towards its goal: he believed that he had done the Christian Church a service. In the article in the *North British* entitled “Genesis and Science,” it is distinctly represented that Mr. Miller, in his last work, instead of carrying forward the standards of Christianity, carried them back,—that, as a Christian apologist, he did not therein advance, but recede. So far as this reviewer and the *North British Review* speak for any Church, that Church is put in the position towards Mr. Miller, not of one thanking and honoring for service, but of one expostulating against undue concession, or repelling actual assault. We believe that this is not just to Mr. Miller, and, so believing, feel that it is appropriate in us to attempt to restore him to the place among the faithful defenders of Christianity which is his due.

But the injustice done to Mr. Miller is comparatively of slight importance as a reason for replying to this article, if, as we maintain, in the next place, it inflicts injury on the cause of truth. The name of Hugh Miller might well be left to guard his reputation. But we believe that the interests of truth are here imperilled, and that in a very critical manner. Let

it be understood that we do not consider the questions which have been raised in connection with the first chapter of Genesis as at an end. We do not commit ourselves irrevocably to any dogma in the case. But so far we can go with unwavering confidence. The *path* indicated in *The Testimony of the Rocks* is that in which advance towards clearer light is possible ; the *key* to the sublime problem has there been given ; while the theory preferred in the article under notice,—the theory best known as that of Dr. Chalmers,—cannot lead to truth or reconciliation, but must imperil the one, and render the other impossible. It is well here to speak with emphasis, because it is of an important part of the defences of Christianity that we speak. It is our solemn conviction that, excluding the express historical evidence of New Testament facts, no argument for the divinity and inspiration of Scripture in the whole range of apologetics is more express, distinct, irresistible, than that to which *The Testimony of the Rocks*, to say the very least, points the way. It is an argument which might be said, with hardly any figure, to convert faith into sight. Already it appears to us sufficient to convince any reasonable man, we say not of the being of God, or of the general truth of Christianity, but of the positive, supernatural inspiration of Scripture ; and were it once perfectly elaborated, as perhaps ten or twenty years may see it elaborated, it might, we maintain, be fairly pleaded as literally and demonstrably equal in strength to the rising of one from the dead. In one word, the Christian apologist is already able, by Mr. Miller's theory, and will become more and more conspicuously able, to propose to the infidel this dilemma : Either a wandering tribe of the Arabian Desert was acquainted, three thousand years ago, with the most recent revelations of science, or the first chapter of Genesis was written by the inspiration of the Almighty. Our readers will agree with us, that if such a weapon has been brought

to the Christian armory, it would be unwise in the Church to cast it aside.

In the further discussion of this subject we shall first briefly point out wherein the writer in the *North British Review* misconceives, and consequently misrepresents, Mr. Miller's course of argument in *The Testimony of The Rocks*. We shall then endeavor to show how much more sound, definite, and satisfactory, considered as a defence of the inspiration of the Mosaic records against the assaults of skeptical geologists, is the theory supported by Mr. Miller than that maintained by this reviewer.

#### SCOPE OF "THE TESTIMONY OF THE ROCKS."

The writer in the *North British Review* has fallen into complete and fatal error in his conception of the general argument in *The Testimony of the Rocks*. "In the chapter on the Palæontological History of Plants," says the reviewer, referring to Mr. Miller's scheme of harmony between Genesis and Geology, "a corroboration of the theory is sought in the alleged 'resemblance, almost amounting to identity,' between the classification of modern botanists and that discovered in the various fossiliferous strata." The writer then proceeds to show that this corroboration is not made out. To all that he says, however, there is a simple answer to be given. The whole allegation of Mr. Miller's having sought such corroboration is a delusion. We are here stating not an argument, but a fact. We point to an entire misapprehension of what Mr. Miller did or intended to do; and the bearing of our allegation on the succeeding argument consists merely in its pointing out how imperfectly the reviewer understood the book he reviewed. Considered in connection with the science of Christian apologetics, *The Testimony of the Rocks* consists mainly, though not,

indeed, entirely, of two parts ; first, a contribution to the argument from design in support of the doctrine of the being and unity of God ; second, a contribution to the argument by which the works of God are brought to bear testimony in favor of his inspired word. The reviewer confounds the two. They do not, however, even stand and fall together ; they are absolutely distinct. Sweep away Mr. Miller's whole theory of the reconciliation between Geology and Genesis, and his argument for the being and unity of God, founded on modern systems of botanical and zoological classification, might remain as clearly recognized a contribution to natural theology as any chapter in Paley : deny all validity to his reasonings in the domain of natural theology, and you must still try on its own merits his theory of Mosaic Geology. The mistake fallen into by the reviewer is a remarkable, and not a very excusable mistake. We can hardly believe him to be fully aware of what his words imply when he disparages Mr. Miller's argument in support of the being and unity of God derived from the palaeontological history of plants and animals. He may reject the theory of *The Testimony of the Rocks* on the first chapter of Genesis, but we venture to say that he cannot reject the preceding argument. Modern botanists and modern zoologists,—thus argues Mr. Miller,—acting in complete independence of Geology, have, by natural reason, matured a certain classification of plants and animals. This classification is an example of the working of human intellect. In the records of a bygone creation, proceeds Mr. Miller, it is found that a classification which may be pronounced all but identical with this was historically developed. Hence an argument for the being and unity of God. The problem of natural theology is to ascend from the human mind and the visible creation to the Divine mind and the unseen Creator. By a process of observing, comparing, reasoning, the human brain works out,

from the extant creation, one classification : in the lapse of by-gone ages, a similar classification was evolved. Is it possible, on a comparison of the two, not to perceive that a mind of which the human is an image,—a mind that can compare and design,—a mind that is one,—had part in the bygone creation? It may be, that the state of science does not yet admit of the detailed elaboration of Mr. Miller's argument ; but to deny that it *does* admit of elaboration, would be very like sapping the whole edifice of natural theology. To our own minds that argument is one of the grandest contributions, if not the very grandest, ever made to natural theology. A watch, said Paley, reveals design ; therefore a watch can be constructed only by mind. A flower, he added, reveals design ; therefore a flower must have been created by mind. But for Paley's watch Mr. Miller substitutes the superb machine of modern classification, put together, in its thousand complications, by the human mind. *That*, he says, is, sure enough, the result of design, the work of mind. Here then,—and he turns on the skeptic,—is the precise counterpart of the magnificent watch, found in the silent desert of bygone ages,—its wheels, its springs, its hands, the same ; will you deny that mind was at the designing of it,—that a reasoning soul like that taken upon him by Jesus Christ inserted *its* wheels and chains?

Mr. Miller walked about Zion, and went around, marking well her bulwarks, and telling the towers thereof; with the eye of a skilful general, he embraced in one view the various points of defence ; and, in *The Testimony of the Rocks*, before proceeding to prove the integrity of the Mosaic record, he deemed it fitting to silence certain of those batteries of Hume and the materialists, which are still from time to time sullenly firing. And this is the true account of that argument from Palaeontology which his reviewer so strangely misconceived.

But, next, it is a mistake to represent, as this writer does,

that Mr. Miller, in the Age theory, puts the third day of creation for the fourth. From the circumstance that Mr. Miller, on a particular occasion, and to a popular audience, restricted himself to three of the creative days, and from not observing which days these were, the reviewer concludes them to be the fourth, fifth, and sixth, instead of, as they are, the third, fifth, and sixth. In his popular lecture, Mr. Miller said, that in the geological record he could expect to find reference to but those three days on which creation of organic existences took place. He omitted, therefore, the first two days and the fourth day. But, even in that lecture, he does not say that he makes the day of plants fall on the fourth, instead of the third; and in his other lectures he so explicitly assigns to each day its own work, that the reviewer is left with but slight excuse. In both cases the third day is that in which flourished the forests of the Carboniferous epoch. In the lecture implicitly, and in other parts of Mr. Miller's work explicitly, the period assigned to the appearance of the sun and moon is that succeeding the Carboniferous epoch, namely, the Permian and Triassic. It is a valid objection to the literary arrangement of *The Testimony of the Rocks*, that it discusses the question of the Mosaic and Scientific Geologies in two different places, and in ways which it may require a moment's reflection to reconcile; but more than a moment's reflection is not necessary, and this it was the reviewer's duty to have devoted to their comparison.

We shall quote here a passage from *The Testimony of the Rocks*, which will at once show how Mr. Miller distinguished three of the creative days, as preëminently geological, from the others, and exhibit the essential features of his theory of reconciliation between Genesis and Science. "What may be termed the three *geologic* days,—the third, fifth, and sixth,—may be held to have extended over those Carboniferous periods during which the great plants were created,—over those Oölitic

and Cretaceous periods during which the great sea-monsters and birds were created,—and over those Tertiary periods during which the great terrestrial mammals were created. For the intervening or fourth day we have that wide space represented by the Permian and Triassic periods, which, less conspicuous in their floras than the period that went immediately before, and less conspicuous in their faunas than the periods that came immediately after, were marked by the decline, and ultimate extinction, of the Palæozoic forms, and the first partially developed beginnings of the secondary ones. And for the first and second days there remain the great Azoic period, during which the immensely developed gneisses, mica schists, and primary clay-slates, were deposited, and the two extended periods represented by the Silurian and Old Red Sandstone systems. These, taken together, exhaust the geological scale, and may be named in their order as,—*first*, the Azoic day or period; *second*, the Silurian and Old Red Sandstone day or period; *third*, the Carboniferous day or period; *fourth*, the Permian or Triassic day or period; *fifth*, the Oölitic and Cretaceous day or period; and *sixth*, the Tertiary day or period."

It is of the highest importance, in considering the claims of the theory of reconciliation between Genesis and Geology maintained by Mr. Miller, to discriminate between its essential characteristics, and what are, more or less, external and adventitious. Attracted by its novel and imposing aspect, and dazzled by the splendor of poetry with which Mr. Miller has invested it, we are apt to conclude that the succession of visions under which, in *The Testimony of the Rocks*, the revelation of the first chapter of Genesis is represented as having been made to Moses, is inseparable from the general theory. Such, however, is not the case. Certain facts and sequences revealed in the rocks have a correspondence with certain facts and sequences revealed in the first chapter of Genesis,—a cor-

respondence so clear and so precise, that it cannot possibly be accounted for except on the grounds of supernatural revelation to the writer of the books of Moses. This is the proposition on which Mr. Miller's theory radically rests. The *mode* in which the revelation was made is another question: it may have been by a succession of visions, or it may not; the point of importance is, that the correspondence exists. For our own part, while deeming the hypothesis of a series of visions one of singular aptness and beauty, and while believing that its acceptance can involve no consequence dangerous to the doctrine of inspiration, we do not profess strictly and literally to maintain it. We conceive that it weakens rather than strengthens the theory of the periods of creation, in exposition and support of which it is put forward. Had Moses seen in vision what the geologist can now see by aid of science, it seems hardly possible that he should not himself have possessed, and transmitted to succeeding generations of the Jewish people, a scientific knowledge of the history of creation. But not the slightest indication exists that Moses scientifically understood what he was made the instrument of revealing; and it is certain that no succeeding generation before the present could scientifically explain his writings. If the vision theory, strictly so called, compromises this fact, the vision theory must be abandoned. The apologetic worth of the argument from the geologic period lies in the circumstance that the first chapter of Genesis is a scientifically exact revelation, but was, in the wisdom of God, uncomprehended for many generations; that it is written in characters of perfect definiteness, but in characters belonging to an unknown tongue; and that, only when at length the light of science is flashed upon the inscription,—only when the lost language is studied and known,—is its meaning plain and unmistakable. This argument must on no account be put in peril. But not only is the hypothesis of a series of visions

connected in no essential manner with the theory of harmony between Genesis and Geology, as maintained by Mr. Miller; — it is not absolutely necessary, to impart value to the theory in question, that the geologic days, corresponding to the days of Genesis, be ultimately discriminated in Mr. Miller's precise manner. It is our belief that very few changes will ultimately be found necessary in his scheme of division; but the great point is, that the mind of the Church should be directed to the availability of the Age theory as a scheme of harmony; and the service here done by Mr. Miller is to point out in what general manner Geology in its present advanced state may be brought into accordance with that theory. He himself distinctly states that our conceptions of the first two days-periods are not yet exact. If he has not, however, finally and perfectly triumphed, he joined a school which must finally and perfectly triumph; and *The Testimony of the Rocks* is to be regarded as a most important contribution to the literature of that school. This is sufficient to vindicate for Mr. Miller the claim to an honored place among Christian apologists.

#### THE OPPOSING SCHEME OF MOSAIC GEOLOGY UNTENABLE.

To avoid technical terms, and to make no demands on scientific information, in a matter which may, we are convinced, be decided on the grounds of common sense, we shall inform our readers in one word wherein the radical difference between the theory of Mr. Miller and that of his reviewer consists. The theory which the reviewer declines to abandon is, that about six thousand years ago the earth was the scene of that chaos described in the first chapter of Genesis in these words, — “And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.” In this view the entire series of geologic creations is ignored; from “the beginning” to

six thousand years ago is one mighty hiatus. According to Mr. Miller's theory, on the other hand, the creative work recorded in Genesis is in correspondence with that revealed in the rocks: the days of Scripture are extended periods of time; and the chaos which is referred to in Genesis preceded the geologic series, instead of occurring at its close. The essential difference, then, is as to the position of the chaotic period. Those who agree with our reviewer place it immediately before the appearance of man; those who follow Mr. Miller place it before the commencement of the geologic ages. If science negatives a recent chaos, the theory of the former falls at once to the ground.

Mr. Miller first enunciated his refutation of the theory of a recent chaos to a popular audience, in a popular lecture. The scheme of such a composition did not admit of a detailed or exhaustive exhibition of proof. The lecturer was compelled rather to choose, from a mass of evidence, one or two easily apprehended and pointed proofs, such as could be speedily despatched on a public platform. Two such proofs he selected,—the first drawn from old and new coast lines,—the second drawn from the unbroken succession of animal and vegetable life through the whole vast duration of the Tertiary period. These proofs appear to us in themselves conclusive. The reviewer does not attempt to fix the age of the present coast line at less than 2600 years; and we presume no geologist would consent to set it under 3000 or 4000. He offers a suggestion or two against the relative age assigned by Mr. Miller to the old coast line; but to these we cannot attach any force, and are confident that, were the opinion of British geologists universally taken on the subject, an immense majority would declare that Mr. Miller's calculation of the combined ages of the coast lines,—6500 years,—was far too moderate. The second argument,—that derived from the

continuation of types of life,—is still more powerful. It is hardly a correct representation of this argument to state it as based on the fact of types of life having been carried forward “from one epoch to another.” The whole question relates to one epoch, the Tertiary. If a chaotic period preceded the creation of man, it *must* fall,—this all concede,—at the very end of the Tertiary period. It *must* fall, not only after the original creation of vast numbers of plants and shells now in existence, but after the first creation of the badger, the wild cat, the fox, the red deer, the hare, and other denizens of our woods. The theory of the opponents of Mr. Miller is, that while these were in existence, a chaotic break took place,—they were all exterminated, and then all again created. Do we not almost instinctively recognize in this something unlike the general method of Divine workmanship? The sudden extermination, moreover, must have taken place in a well-peopled world, and the sudden death of its myriads have converted its surface into a vast cemetery. But no tide-mark has been left of this wave of universal death. As the succession of life can be traced for six thousand years, it can be traced during previous periods.

These, exclusive of certain considerations adduced in other parts of the volume, are the arguments brought forward in *The Testimony of the Rocks* against the theory of a recent chaos. But it would be, we repeat, a most inaccurate representation to say that these arguments, or any which the popular form in which *The Testimony of the Rocks* was drawn up enabled Mr. Miller to use, exhaust the proofs to be advanced against that view. Several years ago, Dr. Pye Smith, one of the most sincere and devout of Calvinistic divines, was so completely convinced by a general survey of the evidence which negatives a recent chaos of universal extent, that he proposed his scheme of a chaos merely local, in order to reconcile Geology

with Scripture ; and, says Mr. Miller, "be it remembered, that between the scheme of lengthened periods, and the scheme of a merely local chaos which existed no one knows how, and of a merely local creation which had its scene no one knows where, geological science leaves us now no choice whatever." The plain fact seems to be, that the very affluence of the proofs at his command prevented Mr. Miller from attempting synoptically to draw them out. It is said that a man who has a strongly marked genius for any one branch of knowledge will not improbably be a bad teacher in that department : he will be apt to outrun his pupils, and fatally to over-rate the facility of his favorite pursuit. In the same way, a reasoner who is, so to speak, superabundantly convinced of the soundness of his theory, may half-unconsciously assume that it is unnecessary to exhibit all its grounds. But if Mr. Miller exhibited no more proof against the proposition of a recent chaos than what at first occurred to him, and was adapted to a popular audience, it is fair, especially when we consider that death has palsied the hand which could have drawn many another shaft from that well-filled quiver, that we should remember the fact, and view the theory in connection with the whole range of the evidence adducible in its support.

It is of course out of the question that we should point out here the whole compass of that evidence. We may refer, however, to one or two important portions of it, not directly cited by Mr. Miller in support of his theory.

Evidence which to us appears of a conclusive character is afforded on the subject by certain American rivers. Between Queenstown Heights and the Falls of Niagara there is a gorge a considerable number of miles in length, which has been hollowed out by the Falls. Sir Charles Lyell pronounced a period of 35,000 years necessary to have completed the work of erosion. If you grant but a half or a fourth part of the

time, you must allow that the river has been flowing from a period antecedent by a thousand years to the creation of Adam. But America furnishes a series of examples similar to that of the gorge of Niagara. We find Mr. M'Ausland, in his very valuable work on Scripture and Geology, quoting the following passage from Professor Hitchcock's well-known work:—"The Niagara gorge is only one among a multitude of examples which might be quoted, and some of them far more striking to a geologist. On Oak Orchard Creek and the Genesee River, between Rochester and Lake Ontario, are similar erosions, seven miles long. On the latter river, south of Rochester, we find a cut from Mount Morris to Portage, sometimes 400 feet deep. On many of our south-western rivers we have what are called caverns or gorges, often 250 feet deep, and several miles long. Near the source of the Missouri River are what are called the Rocky Mountains, where there is a gorge six miles long and 1200 feet deep. Similar cuts occur in the Columbia River, hundreds of feet deep, through the hard trap rock, for hundreds of miles, between the American Falls and the Dalles. At St. Anthony's Falls, in the Mississippi, that river has worn a passage in limestone seven miles long, which distance the cataract has receded. On the Potomac, ten miles west of Washington, the Great Falls have worn back a passage sixty to sixty-five feet deep, four miles continuously;—a greater work, considering the nature of the rock, than has been done by the Niagara." This list is far from exhausted; but it is already of sufficient length. There is probably not one of these instances in which a geologist would not declare the river in question to have occupied its bed for more than six thousand years. It may just be maintained, though hardly, we should think, by any one making pretensions to geological knowledge, that a watery chaos may have covered the whole

face of the earth, but that these rivers, though temporarily swallowed up in the universal ocean, may have resumed their courses. We shall not consider this a hypothesis against which it is necessary to argue; but if there is any mind to which it presents itself with force of evidence, we would point to a case in which such an idea cannot be even entertained. In the volcanic districts of Auvergne, in France, instances are presented of an erosion similar to that exhibited in America, gorges being cut for hundreds of feet through the solid granite on which they rest. The precipices cut by the waters stand there in their nakedness, and the point is distinctly discernible where the work of erosion began. The rock through which it has penetrated was thrown out by the neighboring volcanoes. Of this no doubt can possibly be entertained. The rock must have been emitted before the erosion began. But the erosion has been proceeding for periods to which the six thousand years of human chronology are as yesterday. In this case too, then, the rivers enveloped in the surrounding ocean must have been lifted from their beds, to be gently replaced as the six days' work proceeded. But how was it with the neighboring volcanic craters? Were the loose pumice-stones and scoriæ with which they are covered also spared by the dark and boundless tide? In 1831 Graham Island was flung up by volcanic action from the bosom of the sea. It became three miles in circumference, and two hundred feet in height. Then the volcanic action ceased. In three or four months it was swept out of sight by the waves, and existed, says Mr. Miller, "but as a dangerous shoal." If the sea, merely dashing on its borders, had such power over Graham Island, would not the universal ocean have swept flat the sugar-loaf cones of Auvergne? But there they stand, peaked and sharp, covered with lava which was ejected from the volcanic craters. If the geologist can make any one asser-

tion whatever, he can say that no wave ever dashed against their summits. Need we any further proof against a recent chaos?

#### OBJECTIONS TO THE AGE THEORY OBLIVIATED.

The negative evidence in favor of the scheme of geologic periods,—that consisting in an exhibition of the scientific grounds which prove the hypothesis of a recent chaos to be no longer tenable,—having been indicated, it would now be the natural sequence of argument to present, at least in outline, the positive evidence which may be brought forward in support of Mr. Miller's theory. But we deem it advisable first to turn our attention to the removal of certain objections, which may present themselves to the ordinary student of Scripture, and which may seem to forestall and forbid all scientific argument in the case.

It may be objected, first, that the days of the first chapter of Genesis are obviously natural days, and that violence is done to Scripture by regarding them in any other light. This objection has great influence, if no great weight, and comes supported by the prejudice of three thousand years. Yet we are persuaded that, if calmly contemplated, it can, in accordance with the profoundest reverence for God's word, and the deepest principles of reasoning, be conclusively set aside. In the first place, it is on all hands conceded that the word "day" has been used by all nations to express indefinite periods of time. In the next place, we learn, from the fourth verse of the second chapter of Genesis, that such a use of the word "day" was not rejected by the authority from which the inspiration of both chapters emanated: "These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the *day* that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens." Nor in other parts of Scripture are similar examples wanting. Mr.

MAusland, after referring to several passages of Scripture in support of the theory we now maintain, cites, with great aptness, the passage in the book of Daniel in which the "vision of the morning and evening" is made to embrace a period of "two thousand and three hundred days." Next, it is worthy of being remarked, as is done by the writer whom we have just mentioned, that Josephus and Philo among the ancients, and Whiston, Des Cartes, and De Lue among the moderns, argued—on grounds, of course, entirely independent of science—that the Mosaic days were protracted periods. But lastly,—and this is to us by far the most conclusive argument of all,—it is to be maintained that the subject matter of the revelation made in the first chapter of Genesis is in itself sufficient to render a deviation from the common historical practice in the use of the word "day," probable and natural. Our opponents may argue that the style is simply historical. But on any showing, the first chapter of Genesis is a historical narration of a kind altogether unexampled. It is as completely separated from any human coöperation or action as the purest prophecy. In such a case, there was at least no presumption against the attachment to the word "day," of that meaning which it bears in prophetic passages. And if the works of God, the sole testimony on earth that can plead authority in the interpretation of the word of God, distinctly exhibit that God *did* so use the term, will mere human preconception be permitted to put that testimony to silence? No philological argument will ever prove the first chapter of Genesis to be ordinary history. Its language might take that *form*, because, in the infinite wisdom of God, it was intended that to the human instrument, Moses, used for its transmission, it should appear historical, and should remain sealed in mystery until brought forth in these latter days, to the confusion of the infidel, and the edification of true believers. It was necessary

that its language should not externally and at first sight appear prophetic. But the *substance* of the revelation, known to God only, did not, and could not, pertain to the domain of ordinary history ; and when the works of God have enabled us to understand the full significance of the revelation, we may surely admit that it was just, wise, and right in the Almighty to use certain terms in its transmission in a sense which in other parts of Scripture is appropriated to prophetic revealings. When Scripture history describes scenes in which man has acted, the language of men in its common acceptation is used ; when Scripture reveals what, covered up in the future, is seen by the eye of God only, it adopts a language not in all respects the same as that of every-day life ; and when the sacred volume calls from the past the history of that great creative work in which the hand of God alone was engaged, it is fitting that the language which is used should be that adopted in other parts of Scripture, when man stands aside, and God alone acts.

Passing from this objection, it may be right to allude, in one word, to the impression subsisting in certain quarters, that the Age theory puts in peril the reason annexed to the Fourth Commandment. We confess that this objection appears to us devoid of all semblance of force. Nay, it might, we think, be maintained that the Age theory alone exhibits, in all their Scriptural and scientific breadth, the grounds of the Sabbath rest. The scheme of the geologic periods points to the resting of God as a *fact*. Since the appearance of man in the world, the work of creation has ceased. No species is known to have come into existence since the procession of being was closed by its king. Here, then, is direct confirmation of Scripture. And if the redemption of man is God's Sabbath-day's work, and the reasoning head of this lower creation is permitted, on each recurrent Sabbath in the natural year, to praise and magnify his greatness and mercy in that work, shall we say that

the sanctions attached to the Sabbath-day have become, on account of the light cast by science on God's word, less binding or less sacred?

But, once more, it is flatly affirmed, in opposition of the Age theory, that the successions recorded in Genesis and those revealed in the rocks do not correspond. This assertion is made by the reviewer in the *North British*, and it is manifestly that on which he mainly depends. If it can be conclusively defended, although the opposing scheme would not yet be established, the scheme of the periods would certainly require to be abandoned. It is proved, then, that animal life existed on our globe in the geologic periods corresponding to the first, second, third, and fourth Mosaic days, in the account of which days in Genesis there seems, at a first glance, to be no mention of life; while the creation of creeping things, usually allotted to the fifth Mosaic day, occurred at a much lower point in the scale. Such is the argument of our opponents. It is quite impossible for us to state here the acute and admirable reasoning by which Mr. M'Ausland strives, in meeting it, to show, entirely from Scripture, first, that the expression "the Spirit of God moved upon the waters," amounts to a declaration that certain forms of life were generated on the first day by the creative Spirit; and second, that the Hebrew original does not warrant the allotment of creeping things to the creation of the fifth day, but solely that of the creatures which are presented to us by the fifth geologic period. To that reasoning we attach great weight, and commend our readers to make themselves acquainted with it. But we would call their attention at present more particularly to another argument,—one whose force cannot, we think, be denied, and for apprehending and weighing which no scientific knowledge is necessary. It is simply this; that, even if we conceded, as we by no means do, that the theory of the periods anticipates in certain particulars the

recorded appearance of animals, it is yet, in this respect, in incomparably closer correspondence with the Mosaic account than the theory to which it is opposed by our reviewer. It is *alleged*, though most strenuously denied, that in one or two points the one theory makes the rocks announce special processes of creation earlier than Moses; but it is *allowed* that the other theory makes the Mosaic narrative not declarative of the time of creation at all; it is *allowed* that by it the creation of vast forests and countless animals took place before the Mosaic record gives any surmise of the appearance of tree, of animal, of light itself. There may be difficulty as yet in fitting, word for word, by the one theory, the writing in the rocks to the writing in the Bible. The commas and dashes may not be finally set. But the other theory sweeps the whole revelation of the rocks aside, and, in so sweeping it, renders the Mosaic revelation not a revelation of *the* creation at all, but only that of a recent, and, in comparison with the others, a momentary creation. The supporter of this theory obliterates by one stroke of his pen every chronological mark given in the Mosaic days. He declares that light was *not* first poured on this world six thousand years ago, but perhaps six millions of years. He declares that plants were *not* first created six thousand years ago, but unnumbered ages before. He declares that creeping thing, fowl, fish, and mammal, were *not* first created six thousand years ago, but at some unknown time in the preceding eternity. It will of course be responded that, according to the theory we assail, no succession is alleged, and that it is only when correspondence is affirmed that chronological sequence can be demanded. We are willing to attach all due weight to this consideration; but let it have no more than is its due. Which theory, then, is nearer to the truth, more evidently on the way to the truth?—that which has still but to remove a difficulty here and there, to fit one or two still

dubious correspondences, but which boldly maintains its capability of exhibiting the Mosaic record as a strict account of the evolution of creation on our world since the beginning? or that which to each Mosaic day prefixes a broad and sweeping negative, and declares that each successive operation there recorded did not then first take place, but untold ages before? Is the one theory to be condemned because in one or two cases it does not consider a Mosaic affirmative to have implied a negative; and the other to be preferred, although it embraces, under one unsuggested negative, the whole magnificent procession of creation, from the primeval fire to the end of the Pleistocene epoch? The state of the question is not that of no difficulty on the one side, and all difficulty on the other. By the theory of the reviewer, that account which sets out from "the beginning," and ends with man, passes over without a hint the whole of that work of creation which Geology has revealed. The theory *compels* us to assume an immense gap in a narrative which has the appearance of being connected. This is really an insuperable difficulty. The opposing theory is not yet finally, minutely, and unassailably established; but we deliberately profess, on the strength of it, to find in the first chapter of Genesis a consistent, unbroken narrative; we acknowledge no suppression, but such as the mode and extent of the description rendered absolutely necessary; we begin with it at the beginning, and it leads us to the Sabbath of rest, in which the creative work on our world has ceased.

#### THE POSITIVE EVIDENCE FOR THE AGE THEORY.

God created man in his own image: we can never too vividly remember the fact, or too deeply ponder its significance. In the noblest working of man's highest powers is to be found the best assistance afforded by the whole domain of

nature towards explaining and illustrating the methods of Divine operation. The consummate human artist is distinguished from inferior painters by his power of producing a great effect with slight expenditure of effort or use of material. His eye pierces at once to what is essential and distinctive, seizes the whole of that, and leaves the rest alone : his hand glances for a few moments about the canvas, and the likeness is unmistakable. A burnt stick is to him more than a complete set of colors to another ; a few lines drawn by him signify more than the most complex and elaborate light and shade from an unskilful hand. In this power of narrating much in little space, modern science has somewhat curiously furnished a parallel to the achievements of supreme artistic skill. The telegraph transmits, in a few abrupt and disconnected sentences, those particulars which make up the essential history of a protracted period ; and the art—a very important art—of transmitting telegraphic intelligence, reaches perfection when every item of real moment is transmitted, and not one unnecessary word enters into the composition of the telegram. The first chapter of Genesis may be most accurately conceived either as a succession of descriptive sketches from the hand of an infinitely skilful artist, or as a sublime telegram, composed with absolute skill, and bringing us tidings from a dim and remote antiquity. Considered as pictorial sketches, the records of the successive creations are of course not exhaustive ; but it may be boldly affirmed, that in no other instance, whether in the Bible or out of it, has so much been conveyed in so small space. The resemblance, the likeness, is unerring. These outlined sketches are as true and sure *representations* as if they detailed every motion of every created animal, and showed the light falling over every leaf and wave : but, being sketches, and sketches produced with the smallest possible expenditure of means, they contain dis-

tinetic features, and distinctive features alone. Considered, on the other hand, as sentences of a sublime and wonderful telegram, the descriptions in Genesis are not detailed: were they so, all the chronicles of human history would dwindle into smallness compared with the long annals of those ancient centuries. But were they not here before us, conception would fail to realize, faith would be unable to accept as possible, that marvellous selection of particulars by which the essential history of the planet, probably for millions of years, is condensed into one short chapter. And let it be particularly remarked that, whether the theory of the natural days or that of the extended periods is adopted, this character of condensation and selection must be imputed to the Mosaic account of the creation. Both parties find in one chapter an account of the creation of a world and its inhabitants: both must admit that much has been omitted. On neither hypothesis, therefore, can a negative be inferred because a positive is asserted.

We must offer yet another illustration of the method pursued in the Mosaic record of creation. The discovery and definition of that method are the distinctive merits claimed by the advocates of the Age theory. On a clear and definite apprehension of that method depends the ability to understand, to test, to apply, the Age theory. We have given one illustration of the method of the Mosaic account of creation from science, and another from art; we take our third from nature. In a clear day, when you look upon a mountainous horizon in the far distance, you perceive a delicate film of faint blue or pearly gray relieved against the sky. The outline of that film, faint though it be, is, for every kind of mountain-range, definite and unchangeable. The horizon line of the primaries will be serrated, peaked, and jagged. The horizon line of the metamorphic hills will be more undulating and rounded. The

horizon of the tertiaries will be in long sweeps and tenderly modulated curves. In each case, the line of the horizon tells more than can be told in any other conceivable way, of the character of a whole district of country. Those minute jags and points of the primaries are dizzy precipices and towering peaks. The glacier is creeping on under that filmy blue; the avalanche is thundering in that intense silence. Rivers that will channel continents and separate nation from nation are leaping in foamy cataracts, where you perceive only that the tender amethyst of the sky has taken a deeper tinge. That undulating line of the crystalline hills tells of broad, dreary moors, of dark, sullen streams, of sparse fields of stunted corn. That sweeping, melting, waving line of the tertiaries tells of stately forest and gardened plain, of lordly mansions and bustling villages. Now, the Mosaic record of creation gives the horizon lines of the various geological periods. Its descriptions are unerringly exact, considered as horizon lines. It is impossible to exchange the one for the other. There is no confusion between them. They reveal the very largest possible amount concerning the several periods in the very smallest possible space. When we investigate those periods in detail, when we enter the valleys folded up under those horizons, we find that only under such horizons could such valleys have been; that those horizons really, had we but known it, revealed the character of the underlying valleys. In order to prove them untrue, we have to show, either that other valleys than those we have found must have been under such horizons, or that such horizons are only vaguely and at hap-hazard related to such valleys.

It is agreed on all hands that the first verse in Genesis, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," does not fix the antiquity of the actual matter constituting our globe. It is, however, natural, nay, imperative, to consider the term

"beginning" to have a special significance for our world. Science has now distinctly and finally declared that what may, for our world, be peculiarly called the beginning, was in fire. The eye of science first rests on the earth as a burning mass, of a temperature whose fierce heat cannot be conceived. However long that fire-period may have lasted, it was strictly the beginning. A description which, after alluding to it, sets out from its termination, omits nothing.

"And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." This verse, according to the theory we now oppose, is separated from that immediately preceding by all the geologic ages. Not only from the beginning of things is it divided, but from the special beginning of this world,—from that period of fire when it was unfitted to support animal or vegetable life, when it was draped by no clouds and embraced by no atmosphere;—when it was not an ordered planet, but a raging, flaming chaos. By the theory finally embraced by Mr. Miller, on the other hand, this verse is the natural sequel to that which referred to the beginning of the earth. Formlessness, voidness, and—whenever the fire was sufficiently cooled to admit of the formation of water—a universal, boiling ocean, to whose surface no ray of light could penetrate;—such was the state of the world immediately after the commencing fire-period. In describing it the man of science would in vain seek for more apt or expressive terms than those used in the second verse of Genesis.

"And God said, Let there be light; and there was light."

At what precise point in the evolution of the creative plan light penetrated to the surface of our planet, and shed a faint glimmer through the dense vapor which rose from the seething wilderness of waters, science cannot declare. At a certain

point, however, light did so penetrate. On this Geology speaks plainly. The universal ocean appears to have first wrapped the world, when the molten granite had, to a certain extent, cooled. Then commenced the deposition of the gneisses, the mica-schists, and the clay-slates. These rocks, particularly those of the two former series, are contorted and twisted in a manner which completely distinguishes them from all succeeding rocks. To use the expression applied to them by Mr. Ruskin, they "tremble through their every fibre, like the chords of an *Æolian harp.*" They were manifestly formed in a sea at first surging and tossing on its bed of fire, and thereafter gradually cooled. This fact explains peculiarities in their form, which otherwise mock all conjecture. But if these rocks were deposited in the ocean succeeding the ancient fire, beneath the vapors of a boiling sea, there can be no doubt that for a long period they were enveloped in blackest night, and that at a certain moment this darkness was faintly penetrated. Genesis informs us that the first day's work was completed when the diffused radiance first shimmered through the brooding darkness, and there was on this earth light. Darkness and light,—these are the two essentially descriptive words in the Mosaic telegram, embracing the period between the earth's beginning and the close of the first day. To assume that this positive account implies the negative declaration that, when the ocean became tepid, and light was groping its way to its surface, no minute creature, no *Oldhamia antiqua*, no trilobite, moved in its depths, is entirely gratuitous, and proves that the whole method of the Mosaic narrative has been misconceived. The important fact is, that science cannot possibly describe those early ages, except in a manner to agree with the first verses of Genesis. The inspired word closes the first great period with the appearance on earth of light, and the man of science can fix upon no scientifically estab-

lished occurrence of that primeval time so magnificently decisive, so sublimely closing one era and commencing another, as even this same penetration of light.

The work allotted in Genesis to the second day is the formation of what, in our translation, is rendered a "firmament," but which all now agree in considering rather an expansion or atmosphere. Mr. Miller regarded the geological interpretation of the work of this day, which he believed to have fallen on the ages succeeding those of the metamorphic rocks, as peculiarly difficult. Mr. Ruskin, on the other hand, considers it exceedingly easy. We are, on the whole, inclined to think that though much may still be done towards defining the limits of this day's duration, and towards scientifically working out the processes by which the mighty operation of dividing the waters which are under the firmament from the waters which are above the firmament, was performed, the operation itself can be already with sufficient clearness apprehended. The distinctive features of the creative work were still those pertaining, not so much to the earth's surface, as to its meteorological phenomena. The first grand advance had been the pervasion of the vapors which encompassed the earth by light. But for a protracted period the faintly-illuminated steam could not be again condensed, so as to fall in rain. It was only as the earth cooled, and the temperature of the air fell, that sudden and local condensation of the vapor could take place. When it could take place, the second day's work was done. And assuredly this arrangement of the clouds over the face of the sky, this fitting up of that marvellous apparatus by which unnumbered rivers were to be filled and unnumbered harvests to ripen, was the chief and distinctive operation of that early time. To this assertion science cannot but yield assent. It is a wondrous tale that those few rain-marks on the Old Red Sandstone tell. The few insignificant plants and living crea-

tures which then also existed were altogether unimportant as characteristic of the period, compared with that great process of separating "the waters which *fall* and *flow*, from those which *rise* and *float*." The *North British* reviewer is here of a different opinion. We cannot agree with him. We concede at once that during the Silurian and Old Red Sandstone periods there existed several species of plants and animals. But to mention these in the record in Genesis would have been a departure from the whole method of that record. Their presence was not distinctive. They passed away after having done little. For us their importance is past. But it has at this day the profoundest and loftiest interest for all men, to know when the Almighty bade the cloud gather up its stores to water the fields we *now* till,—when the vast, vague, colorless mist drew itself up in draperies of gold, and purple, and scarlet, round the chamber of the blue,—when the tempest was first tamed to the steady gale, and the trade-winds were bid to blow,—when that innumerable army of the rain, whose cloudy banners kindle the sky over *our* heads into beauty, was first appointed to its mighty work of furrowing the mountain, and fertilizing the valley, and shaping the face of the earth, æon after æon, as the Creator wills. Be the Bible inspired or no, we shall never recognize any description of the progress in creation during those ages as essentially and scientifically true, which does not, as is done in Genesis, pass over all other things as comparatively unimportant, and throw out into boldest relief the proclamation of this "most magnificent ordinance of the clouds."

On the remaining days we need not linger. The third,—that during which grew the forests of the Carboniferous era,—is described in Genesis as that of herbs and trees, and of the separation of land and water. What were then the distinctive features of the period? Science points them out

as two. Such forests have never clothed the world as those of the Carboniferous era; and, in order to their growth, it was absolutely necessary that the extent of land should have been very great. In other words, the separation of land and sea, and the growth of a vast flora, distinguished the period; and when we state the fact, we find ourselves almost necessarily using the words of Genesis. The fourth day was that on which the sun first shone out upon the world. Light had been announced before. The sun now appears. We are compelled to assume it as declared that the sun was not visible until the fourth day. And, wonderful to say, science shows this to have been the case. *The plants of the great Carboniferous epoch are such as must never have been touched by a sunbeam.* They are such precisely as would have grown in a humid atmosphere; their wood is not hardened, as that of plants on which the pure sunlight falls. In the Permian and Triassic ages, trees of tough fibre, and with season-rings, are found; and the Permian and Triassic periods coincide with the fourth day of the Mosaic account. The fifth day was that of monstrous creeping things and of birds. Its correspondence with the Liassic and Oölitic periods is unmistakable. The aerial phenomena of our world were now no longer the most striking, novel, or important. The earth was a prepared stage, and the interest concentrated itself on the living creatures that moved upon it. The inspired telegram, therefore, speaks of these. Last of all, at the close of the sixth day, that of the Tertiary periods, man was created; the final picture has for its centre a king. The mighty work was finished. The cycle of operations which had begun with the raging flame, and which for long ages had been carried forward by the wild ministry of volcano and deluge, was brought to a termination. The Sabbath of creation dawned. Do you doubt of the reality of this Sabbath? Do you question the reasonableness of its being,

as it were, the motive and impulse of the Creator in conferring on man the gentle blessing of Sabbath rest? Then look around, and compare the present scene with those of the bygone days. Think of those periods of fire and flood, of darkness and tempest, of gigantic birds, and dragons at whose huge bones we even yet shudder; and then remember the soft falling of the sunbeam on the flower, the gentle lapse of the streamlet in the glade, the tender warbling amid the golden-green of the spring woods; and be assured that the one discord in the Sabbathic harmony of terrestrial nature comes from the human heart; that the sin of man alone blots the Sabbath light resting on the face of the earth; that, compared with the long week-days, the human period is the Sabbath of the world, and that man is the great Sabbath-breaker.

#### OPPOSING THEORIES OF RECONCILIATION BETWEEN GEOLOGY AND REVELATION: THEIR APOLOGETIC VALUE.

Having, we venture to hope, set before our readers with sufficient distinctness the true purport of the theory of reconciliation between Genesis and Geology supported in *The Testimony of the Rocks*, and having glanced at the leading arguments for and against that theory, we are in a position to return to that most important question to which we referred in the outset,— Whether this theory is a retrogression or an advance in the line of Christian apologetics,— whether the views of Mr. Miller, or those of his reviewer, are of greater avail in defence of the Christian Revelation?

The theory of natural days has somewhat to commend it. It has a clear, compact, what might be called commonplace aspect. At first sight it appears business-like and practical. It comfortably avoids generalization, it requires little illustration, and it gets rid of what appears a suspicious sublimity.

It seems difficult to assail, and yet it gives perfect freedom to speculation. Drawing a ring-fence round the garden of the revealed word, it permits as much digging and planting in the country beyond as the most ardent philosopher could desire. The rocks are simply put out of account. The inspired record is assumed to know nothing concerning them. The Bible is declared to be the domain of an implicit, unquestioning faith, which does not desire to see: over the geologic ages a curious reason may expatriate at will. We need not be surprised that such a theory proves attractive to certain minds. Combine true devoutness with sincere love of science, a sense of the need of perfect freedom in the exercise of reason with earnest acceptance of the Christian revelation,—let a sharp logical faculty be united with an undue appreciation of the natural, healthful, divinely-appointed functions of the speculative and imaginative powers,—and you have a mind to which this theory is naturally agreeable. Many persons also, whose minds are not of this order, but who have for a long period regarded the old view as satisfactory, may be expected, though good geologists otherwise, to attach undue importance to arguments which convinced them in their youth, and unconsciously to put prejudice for logic. Having been hitherto at rest, these persons will too easily mistake change for danger, and think it safer to remain in their little canoe than to scale the sides of the larger vessel. Yet it is difficult to conceive the two theories set fairly in contrast, and the belief still retained that Mr. Miller's is a less complete defence of the inspired volume than the reviewer's. In every point of vital importance the one triumphantly succeeds, the other signally fails. Each apparent advantage pertaining to the theory of natural days is found on examination to be a counterfeit. If it seem clear and compact, it but substitutes the littleness of human conception for the sublimity of the Divine operations. If those

who rest in it have a feeling of safety, it is but that of the garrison which too timidly shuts itself up in a little fortress, leaving the whole of the open country to the enemy. If it appear to vindicate the honor of God, and to prove the integrity of his revelation, it in reality puts both in peril, by separating between the word and the works of the Almighty. Let us carry out a contrast between the two theories somewhat in detail.

It is undeniable, to begin with, that the theory of natural days breaks the continuity of the Mosaic record, while it is perfectly preserved by that of Mr. Miller. If we can point to a period which was, for this world, literally and scientifically the beginning, and to epoch after epoch succeeding, in which the leading features of the Mosaic and geologic records are unmistakably identical, there is no hiatus in the inspired narrative; the most rigorous philologist may be appealed to for his testimony to its magnificent symmetry and its marvellous condensation. Thus we are enabled to proceed by the theory of Mr. Miller. On the other hypothesis, the small conjunction "and," which so naturally links the first verse in Genesis with the second, forms an objection, in the mouth of the philologist, which may really be pronounced insurmountable. Either this conjunction passes over an immensely extended period of time without hint of its existence, or calls that the beginning which can with no definiteness or accuracy be so defined. The latter is, we believe, the alternative most generally accepted. The "beginning" is declared to have extended to the end of the geologic epochs. But how can it be considered correct to include under the same term a period of flaming ruin, when life was impossible on our planet, before its molten surges had hardened into the adamant that was to bear a world, and periods in which the fire had subsided,—periods when plants grew and creatures lived,—periods when light fell through a

transparent atmosphere, and animals breathed which were to subsist along with man? Compared with the human period, the geologic ages are as week-days to a Sabbath; but it is a positive mistake to describe them as chaotic. They are marked off from the chaos as clearly as from the time of man. They belong no more to the "beginning" than to the last creation, which, according to our opponents, occupied the six natural days. Philology and Geology equally protest against a use of the term "beginning," which would extend it beyond the fire-period. Shall we disregard both sciences, and reject the continuity, completeness, and harmony of the Millerian theory, merely that we may confine to spaces of four-and-twenty hours those days of creation in which that God was at work who has told us that with Him a day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day?

In the next place,—and this is a point of fearful importance,—it must now be distinctly conceded that the theory of natural days cannot be authoritatively accepted and taught by the Churches without occasioning a vast amount of unbelief. It seems to us that if an angel were sent from heaven to proclaim to theologians the special temptation and peril of the time, he would declare it to be that of taking up a station apart from and behind the genuine enlightenment of the century. Man is the chief instance of God's productive power here below. His eye is an instrument of infinite delicacy, adapted for beholding the works of God. His hand is endowed with inexpressible cunning, to follow up the discoveries of his eye. His mind is the most wondrous specimen of Divine workmanship of all; and to it, aided and guided by Divine Providence, and acting through the senses, is it appointed to work out man's task in time, and to rear the great temple of civilization. To work with hand and brain is a duty proclaimed by man's conscience, and enforced in his Bible. It is no less than irrever-

ence to God to scorn or defame those results of human inquiry in which instincts implanted and capacities conferred by God have proceeded to their natural goal. Now, we are perfectly sure that no Protestant Church would for a moment deliberately contemplate this. But *one* point can no longer be doubted, that, namely, if the theory against which we contend is identified with the Protestant creeds, the conviction *will* sink into the mind of the scientific part of the community that the Churches are behind the age, that they fear the light, that they would put out the eyes of reason. Whatever may be the case in individual instances, or with peculiarly constituted minds, science will no longer believe in a universal chaos covering the face of the earth some six thousand years ago. On this point, the unmistakable, irresistible tendency is to that authoritative unanimity of science with which it is in vain to contend,—that authoritative unanimity whose seal secures belief beyond the walls of the school, which makes us credit the theory of gravitation though unacquainted with the arguments of Newton, and rely on that of the circulation of the blood though we never followed the demonstrations of Harvey. When scientific men are thus unanimous, argument ceases. The Churches might then fondly dream that the danger was past. But the religious and philosophical history of the last hundred years renders it easy to see what the result would be. Science would assume the attitude of Galileo; pitying toleration would supersede both assent and attack; and the highest culture, separating itself from Christianity, would exhibit to us in England and in Scotland what it has already so long exhibited on the Continent,—a refined, a self-satisfied, a most plausible Paganism.

Further, the theory we oppose is *avowedly* unable to contribute anything *positive* to Christian apologetics. Did we even grant all its pretensions, its attitude would be entirely negative.

It aims at no explanation ; it demands and it offers no confirmation of the word from the works of the Creator ; it seeks not victory, but only peace ; it spreads over the geologic ages a ghastly silence, a Godless desolation, and calls this the tranquillity of triumph. But the theory of Mr. Miller is a new, a positive, a weighty addition to the external evidences of Christianity. The argument it affords is clear and convincing. The Christian apologist, armed with its reasoning, may challenge the skeptic to produce, from all the records of mythology, ancient or modern, northern or oriental, any correspondence between cosmogony and science which will for a moment compare with the correspondence it exhibits between the geologic periods and the Mosaic days. To this challenge the skeptic will in vain attempt to respond. Point after point of marvelous correspondence the Christian apologist can urge on his observation, pressing him, meanwhile, to explain how the Hebrew leader, legislating for an uncultured tribe, became possessed of those unsurmised secrets three thousand years ago. To omit other instances, let one express and striking argument in favor of inspiration afforded by this theory be particularly considered. We cannot be far wrong in stating that, ever since wit and blasphemy cemented an unholy union, the Mosaic declaration of the appearance of light in our world before the sun was visible has been a favorite subject for infidel derision. The opportunity of attack was indeed tempting. Men naturally associate light with the sun and moon, and their separation seems at first sight flat nonsense. For three thousand years the Christian apologist could only say that so it had been. For three thousand years the mysterious oracle was unread. In the nineteenth century, science comes forward distinctly to inform us that, during three sufficiently discriminated periods, there was light on this world, while the sun and moon were invisible. In the fourth period the heavenly luminaries were

unveiled. And, lo! this is what is declared in Genesis. How, we ask, did Moses know that fact? How did he know that, first when the impenetrable veil of steam covering the primeval ocean became less dense, light shimmered faintly through? How did he know that no clear sunbeam ever found its way to the Carboniferous forests? Could he discriminate the properties of light, separating those which color and harden from those which only irradiate? The fact comes upon one like a flash of lightning. The book in which, three thousand years ago, the aerial conditions of our planet for uncounted ages before man appeared on the world are unmistakably described, *must* have come from God.

Once more, not only does the reviewer's theory break the continuity of the narrative in Genesis;—it destroys the completeness of the word of God considered as a whole. It confines revelation to a part of the world's history. It removes from its ken protracted periods in which, as the rocks cannot but be regarded as demonstrating, the Almighty was at work with our planet, and race after race of plants and animals were showing forth his glory. Turning to the other theory, we see revelation synchronous with the history of our planet. The word in which the redeeming Christ is revealed becomes precisely commensurate with the time in which the creating Christ has exhibited, on our planet, his creative power. The closing books of the New Testament tell us of a fire which will in the latter time envelope the world. The first book of the Old Testament, read by the light reflected from the works of God, points us to a commencing fire in which the planet, as now constituted, had its beginning. From fire to fire spans the arch of creation; from fire to fire spans the arch of revelation; Christ the alpha and the omega of both.









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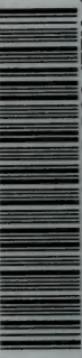
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